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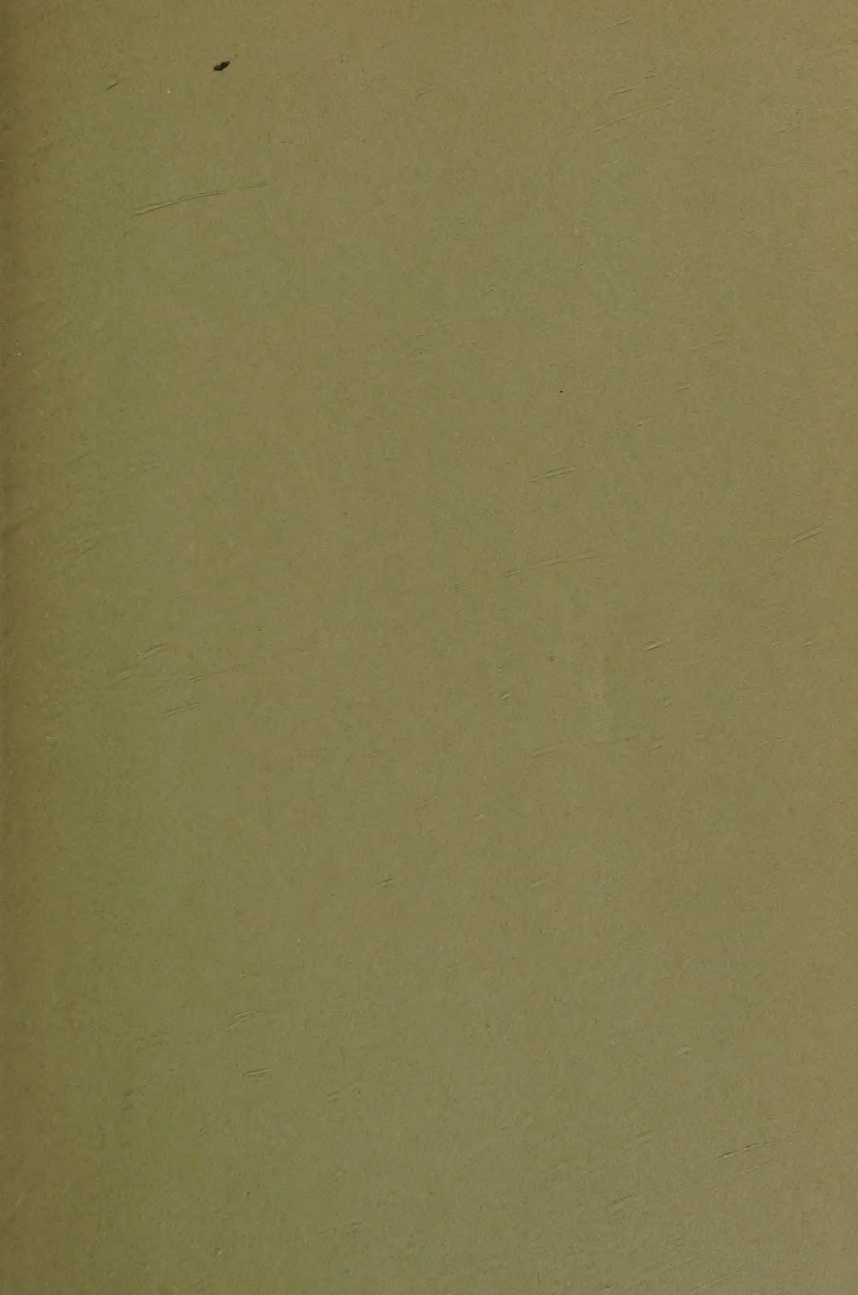


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THE
UNITY
OF
THE WORLD

The
UNITY OF THE
WORLD

by
GUGLIELMO FERRERO

With a foreword by
CHARLES A. BEARD



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PREFATORY NOTE

Guglielmo Ferrero needs no introduction in the United States. Wherever history is read, his works are known and studied. Moreover, many Americans who heard him on the occasion of his visit to this country twenty years ago still recall with pleasure their good fortune and await his lightest word with expectancy.

Yet it may not be amiss to give a special greeting to this work and to commend it with emphasis in a day when the market is flooded with

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literary wares. The form, the theme, and the spirit of the volume before us give it a rare power and make it thrice welcome.

It is a small book about a great subject by a distinguished thinker. Such combinations are not common. And it is written with an artistic verve that delights the reader while whirling him through time and space, challenging him and informing him.

No subject appeals, or ought to appeal, with more force to modern intelligence than the unification of the world and the contradictions connected with it. No subject deserves deeper consideration, for the very destinies of nations, of civilization embracing all values, are bound up in the process. What knowledge and comprehension are required to deal with it effectively! Perhaps the task is at bottom impossible, but the author of this book is as well fitted as any philosopher to wrestle with it. He brings to the undertaking a mastery of a vast armory of facts and a penetrating wisdom. And the result is a volume that strikes fire. Students who have given years to the consideration of the theme

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will find illumination on every page and the lay reader will be startled into thinking by its thrusting analysis and its apposite illustrations.

High among the qualities of the volume is its spirit. In these pages there is none of the petty nationalism that mars most of the books on the civilizing process, especially those on America. Having surveyed the pageant of ancient Rome with the eye of a commanding general, the author turns a calm, untroubled face to the world-transforming operations of our own time. Whether he speaks of China, or Europe, or the United States, he speaks without bitterness, without insinuations of contempt or pride. If he prefers some of the loveliness of the Old World to the efficiency of the New, he knows why and at what price. He is well aware of the revolutionary effect of the machine and understands its limitations. But he does not complain or take on airs. With a kind of Olympian serenity, he watches the great Kaleidoscope of History turning remorselessly on its axis, shaking out new patterns—vast mosaics beyond the designs of little men and women. He records, penetrates,

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offers explanations, and accepts, but he does not quarrel.

And what is the upshot of this survey of the process which unifies and divides the world? It is not the pessimism of a distempered fatalist nor the facile optimism of the excited salesman. It is a firm confidence in the substance of things, a confidence that makes room for liberty, for universal suffrage, for the despised masses of mankind, a confidence that finds the world more than a battleground where swine trample themselves in the mire and die. And if I am not grievously mistaken, this book will become one of the universal classics to be read with Plato and Aristotle by the long generations to come. Its structure of thought symbolizes the solid masonry of Rome and its philosophy the brooding spirit of the Acropolis. Those who may be inclined to dispute some of its propositions will concede its essential power.

CHARLES A. BEARD

New Milford, Conn.,
December, 1929.

CHAPTER ONE

World Unity

MANKIND labors, from generation to generation, in obscurity. It rests in ignorance of the work of its hands. Only when a history is complete, when men can turn and regard it from the outside, does its meaning begin to be understood. Ignorant of what it has been doing, for four centuries the human race has been laboring at the most gigantic of its tasks: the conquest and unification of the earth.

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This conquest commenced towards the end of the Fifteenth Century when a great Italian set out with a few ships on the ocean and discovered America. Until then the human race had been unaware of itself, unaware also of the planet which had been assigned to it as dwelling place; it knew neither the true shape of the earth nor by how many races and peoples it was inhabited. The members of the human family dwelt apart from one another in mutual aloofness, separated from each other by the wild solitude of mountains and deserts and oceans.

Following the discovery of America humanity commenced to take possession of the earth and to find its own way by various methods: exploration, colonization, emigration, conquest, commerce, treaties, diplomacy, evangelism. Gradually peoples, races, continents, learned to know themselves. The earth, during the past four centuries, has

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slowly been evolving into a single and immense body.

Slow for three centuries, the conquest and unification of the earth became swifter during the Nineteenth, when Europe and America seized control of the realms of iron and heat, when they were able to command steam and electricity, railroads and the telegraph. Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century it could be said that at last man knew and possessed virtually the entire globe. Railways and telegraphic cables were the nerve-system of the earth, which was now a single body. This unification, nevertheless, was not accomplished without a curious contradiction. The more unified did the world grow in knowledge of itself, the more apparent became the differentiation of its parts as regards language, religion, conception of life, morality and interests. As long as peoples and the various branches

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of the human family lived in isolation, assembled in tiny groups, they remained unaware of the differences which kept them separate and consequently neither liked nor disliked one another. Remoteness and ignorance shut up the different human groups in water-tight compartments, inaccessible either to hatred or affection.

The situation changed the moment the scattered branches of the human family commenced to intermingle. They then perceived that they differed, and these differences attracted them in the same measure that they inspired a reciprocal dislike. Out of diversity hatred and love simultaneously were born: the unification of the world was thus accomplished equally by the gospel and by the sword, by comity and extermination, by exchange of treaties and gunshots. At the same time that unification was making headway, the world was becoming a volcano of war

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and revolution. It was laid waste, during the past four centuries, by wars and revolutions of constantly increasing importance and violence until at last the human race discovered that it possessed but a single body and a single soul, and discovered it in the midst of the worst war in history.

How many men, how much wealth, how many states perished in the world war! What sorrow, what insanity, what hatred, what a spirit of rebellion was sown among millions! What a fearful outburst of ferocity and madness it provoked on three continents! But on the other hand what tremendous impulse it gave to the slow advance of world unification! When Germany invaded Belgium, the entire world, America and Australia as well as Holland and Denmark, felt the menacing effect of the crushing of a tiny state by a gigantic force. When the Russian Empire fell the wealth of the world,

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from Wall Street bankers to Indian rajahs, trembled in fear; every existing state, republic or monarchy, democracy or aristocracy, shook on its foundations.

Every nation followed the terrible struggle which had broken out in the heart of Europe, hoping from it some good or fearing from it some evil. Every nation had cause to rejoice and to suffer from its illusions and disillusion, both in the war and in the peace that followed. Every nation, even those left richer, suffers to-day from the enormous destruction of wealth and the widespread havoc wrought to personal fortunes by the war.

The world to-day is troubled by insomnia because both Europe and Asia are sick. The instability of Europe, the muffled ferment of Asia, threaten the mechanism of the rest of the world. If the various races are a prey to reciprocal hatreds, reciprocal fears, never

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were they more in need of each other than now. All of them are unhappy; they fear and despise each other and play each other false when they are most in need of their neighbors. Particularly is this true in Europe, which has never been so rent in pieces, nor so much in need of unity.

The contradiction is tragic, terrible, monstrous. We should not, however, too violently decry it: fate has willed that humankind should rely for foundations not only upon mutual trust and assistance but also upon mutual hatred and injury. For four centuries the outcome of every war, unless one of the combatants has been annihilated, has been coalition. This tragic contradiction is the preparation for universal civilization, which to-morrow will dominate the earth.

The unification of the world, accomplished by colonization, by exploration, by emigration, by universal religions, by wars,

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by commerce, diplomacy, railroads and telegraphic communication must lead to a civilization of a universal character. A single body cannot go on living under the guidance of several discordant and inimical consciences. The world body, which is now almost a physical entity, requires a single conscience in which there will be room for all that is best of the civilizations already existing to reside in harmony: Christian morality, occidental industry and science, the ancient wisdom of the East, the flower of European and Asiatic art.

We shall now proceed to investigate the profound work of unification—in its most obscure and grievous manifestations.

CHAPTER TWO

China and Europe

How many Europeans know how to read Chinese or to speak it? The language of a people is the key to its ideas and emotions. Since Europe first came in contact with China, the latter as an entity has been no more accessible to our understanding than has the Chinese language.

A few translations, more or less faithful, of a certain number of classic works, the contacts of missionaries, the notebook and

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impressions of travelers—these have been our sole sources of information.

Entirely ignorant of China, we have contented ourselves with a curious explanation which has ended by making still more inexplicable what we wished to explain—that Chinese civilization has not progressed an inch in thousands of years. This idea has become so rooted in our imagination that we willingly take the present revolution to be the end of a century of sleep. The sleeping giant is awake at last!

But how could a people incapable of progress have been able to create a civilization at once so complicated and refined? Why should the Chinese, at a certain moment, have lost the strength to create and to evolve if once they possessed it?

What a puzzle China was for Nineteenth Century Europe! It is not easy to say to what extent this lack of comprehension was

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mutual: one has the impression that the Chinese intelligentsia understood Nineteenth Century Europe a little better than the latter did China, but this comprehension seems to have been the effect of fear and a need for defense rather than of sympathy and admiration. To-day especially, in the midst of the ruins of her old Confucian civilization, China is assimilating ideas and principles which have for a long time been repugnant to her, only in order to defend itself against America and Europe. This assimilation will cease, in all probability, when its defensive requirements have been met.

If there ever were two worlds impervious to one another they were Europe and China; nevertheless, for two centuries they have been influencing one another although they possessed no mutual understanding. It is one of the most unexpected and surprising

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revelations of the unification of the world.

There exists in the Celestial Kingdom a school which maintains that China had a decisive influence on the French Revolution. An old Chinese writer who has a good understanding of Europe although he is an ardent traditionalist, Ku-Hung-Ming, advanced ingenious arguments to support the theory. What did the endeavor of the French Revolution, continued during the Nineteenth Century, amount to? To substitute a rationalistic conception of society and the state for a mystic conception. But from what source did Europe borrow the idea of a society organized and ruled by reason? Ku-Hung-Ming had no hesitation about supplying the answer: from China, from the old China of Confucius which was far more rationalistic than Catholic or Protestant Europe prior to the Revolution.

Confucianism being a doctrine of conduct

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for the individual and for the State, based almost exclusively on a reasoned analysis of human nature, Europeans should have begun during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries to perceive in China that a brilliant civilization and a well-organized state could manage very well without the continual interference of organized religion. While slightly paradoxical, this thesis might be partially true. The progress of rationalism during the Eighteenth Century had many other causes; but it is not impossible that the example of China did contribute to it. The lively curiosity of the Eighteenth Century about everything Chinese would thus be best explained. But if China indirectly participated in the great European upset at the end of the Eighteenth Century, the rôles are to-day reversed. The Chinese revolution is the work of Europe. Knowing little about the old Confucian China and understand-

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ing that little badly, Europe has succeeded in its destruction.

The Chinese Revolution is a part of the great awakening which, commencing with the Young-Turk Revolution of 1908, has turned Asia and Europe upside down: the collapse of the monarchical system. The point of departure of the crisis was the fall of the Chinese monarchy and the proclamation of the Republic at Peking in 1911. What, however, was the reason for the fall of the Chinese monarchy in 1911, regardless of the veneration with which it was still surrounded, regardless of the doctrine of fidelity to the Emperor preached by Confucius? Because since 1840 Europe and America had been undermining it with example and teaching and at the same time with the wars that they had been waging against it, the humiliations they had inflicted, and the treaties they had imposed upon it. While

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China was being shown, by diplomatic complications which grew graver and graver and wars which grew more and more disastrous, that the Son of Heaven was no longer capable of defending his Empire, the democratic ideas of the West were spreading. Particularly after 1900, the Boxer uprising and the last European invasion, American schools and universities opened their doors to an increasing number of Chinese. If, in the Eighteenth Century, Europeans returned from China with the idea of a society which governed itself without the aid of priests, the Chinese brought back from America the astonishing recollection of a democracy that was fabulously rich. Little by little, these doctrines, aided by events and the feebleness of the old régime, did their work.

Every one knows how modest were the beginnings of the Chinese Revolution. It

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was limited, during the first years, to the organization of a parliamentary republic on the occidental model. Civil War and general unrest, the effort of a large part of the human race to change its history as another part changed theirs in Europe between 1789 and 1815, commenced only after, and as a result of, the World War and the Russian Revolution. The cause of it is still in Europe. As long as the Russian Empire was in existence, the revolutionary forces of China scarcely dared make a move. The Slav colossus, its notorious ambitions, the fear of giving it a pretext for territorial intervention, held them back. The colossus fallen and Russia become an ally of the Chinese Revolution, the revolutionary forces burst forth with irresistible strength.

Enormous, sluggish, almost incapable of progress in the occidental sense of the word, Czarist Russia was a static element, the

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world importance of which was revealed only by its disappearance. All of Asia and a part of Europe retained their ancient institutions and resigned themselves to a peace and order with which they were not satisfied in fear of the mysterious power which, from Saint Petersburg, intimidated two continents. Moreover, the fall of this power was followed by a general dislocation of the monarchical system. If the first blows were given to the system by the Turkish Revolution of 1908 and the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the Russian Revolution dealt the decisive blow. After the fall of the Muscovite Empire, the monarchical principle collapsed everywhere; in Austria, Germany, Turkey, Greece; the spirit of rebellion seized the whole of Asia; the Turkish Empire was transformed into a dictatorial and nationalistic republic which successfully extracted from Europe the treaty of Lausanne;

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the Chinese Revolution destroyed one of the oldest civilizations of the world.

How astonishingly complex are the repercussions of events! Because the empire of the Czars was replaced by a revolutionary dictatorship, the whole earth was plunged into unrest.

In former times the world possessed numerous independent points of focus. Empires might fall to wrack and ruin in the Far East without the Mediterranean basin being aware of it; the Mediterranean basin might sink into anarchy without unduly upsetting distant Asia. Nowadays, the world lives a single, coördinated life despite the diversity of races and climates, religions and customs.

"The internal happenings of other countries are no concern of ours," diplomats like to say. The formula might have value behind the closed doors of chancelleries;

dragged out into the open air of reality, it has none. On the contrary it could be said that nothing concerns every people more than do the political crises and *coups d'état* and revolutions which are capable of shaking the foundations of the social order in one part or another of the earth. Isolated destinies no longer exist among the nations; the repercussions of events, whether direct or indirect, from one end of the earth to the other are as unforeseeable as they are inevitable; the world while its individual parts are in conflict with one another, is allowing itself to be bound little by little by invisible liens, produced by the conflicts themselves. It is by its catastrophes that the world is achieving unity.

Mankind, however, is not yet aware of it. It still believes itself to be in the epoch when peoples and civilizations and states dwelt in small groups with isolated, individual des-

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tinies; it even believes, because discord is rampant in the world, that the various races are more isolated and egocentric than ever before. This contradiction between the reality and the accepted belief, this advance which the facts have made over ideas, constitutes one of the most difficult problems of our time. Virtually all the misconceptions caused by the War and the subsequent peace are the result of it. While the War was still going on, and immediately after the War, only the immediate consequences of events were foreseen; the indirect repercussions which, in the all but realized unity of the world, were often of far greater importance, were overlooked; and every day brings us face to face with a new surprise.

One fact must be recognized; the repercussions are usually so complex that it is very difficult, and sometimes quite impossible, to foresee them. One might, for ex-

ample, by turning towards the past, discover a connection between the Chinese Revolution, the occupation of Egypt by England in 1882 and the War of 1870. Was not the great impetus of the Chinese Revolution brought about by the fall of the Russian Empire? But this empire fell because the Germanic nations succeeded in blockading it during the World War and the efficiency of the blockade was effected by the alliance of Turkey to Germany during the war. And how did it happen that Turkey became a bosom friend of Germany's during the thirty years that preceded the war? Because England had occupied Egypt, thereby separating the Asiatic from the African provinces of its Empire, and because France was allied to Russia, hereditary enemy of the Sultan's Empire.

Everything is co-ordinated in the history of the modern world. But what genius could

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foresee consequences so remote in the inextricable confusion of secret sympathies? Must one then conclude that world unity is a misfortune, that it exposes us, quite unwillingly, to catastrophes which are impossible to predict?

We would be rebelling against the most profound law of humanity. Since these catastrophes, provoked by our imprudence, bring about the acceleration of world unity, they fit into the providential pattern of history. They find in themselves their salutary corrective by developing the unity of the world in an actual sense and the significance of this unity in a spiritual sense. Proportionately as this significance becomes stronger and more clear it will restore to its proper value a quality which Europeans and Americans have come to esteem less and less since the French Revolution: prudence. For a century we have been mixing up wisdom with

temerity, each day a little more. To lose no chance to increase our power and wealth, never to hesitate to demolish or overturn present and past for the profit of the future, seeking always immediate success without worry about the immediate consequences, this has been the policy of the West in the larger affairs of the world. In proportion to the perception by the human conscience that in a unified world the remote consequences of an action can be tremendous, this passion for action for action's sake will calm down and a prudent slowness appear wiser than blind enthusiasm.

The old China, which disappeared in the flames of the Revolution, can give us a valuable lesson on this point. It possessed statesmen, it seems, who found our precipitate boldness and enthusiastic ambitions a source of some amusement. Such must have been the venerable mandarin who, a

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dozen years ago, after having listened to an ardent eulogy of the French Revolution by a European statesman, answered:

“Yes, the French Revolution was a great, a very great, occurrence. But it is still too soon to judge its final effects. Would it not be wiser to wait awhile and see which of its effects are really final?”

CHAPTER THREE

Abel and Cain

“**Y**ou want to unify the world. But in the meantime, while it is awaiting unification, Europe is a seething mass of national hatreds — that’s the brutal truth. Each people considers itself an Abel threatened by a Cain. The friends of peace and the diplomatic conferences are wasting their time; no strength of sentiment or reason will triumph over these indestructible enmities.”

Such is one of the favorite objections of

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the skeptics. A kind of organic necessity will make peoples forever enemies. A great number of them in Europe are indeed divided by profound and stubborn animosities — who can deny it? Although France and Germany and Italy and England, to whom we attribute the same capacity for affection and hatred as we do to individuals, are in reality only vague abstractions, these collective animosities exist everywhere without precise localization and are from time to time manifested by irresistible force: the World War proved it. Nevertheless, if to-day they can be a menace to peace, is it correct to say that they are a permanent and ever-present cause of war? Would it not be fairer to regard these animosities as an effect of wars which have raged in Europe since the French Revolution and to connect them not with a satanic obsession in human nature but rather with historic events of a limited operation?

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Many people have come to the conclusion that the people of Europe hate one another for the simple pleasure of doing harm, because the historic causes of their hatred are often so difficult to ferret out. An example of this difficulty is furnished by the excess of Francophobia which bursts out from time to time in Italy. The natural frontiers between France and Italy are sufficiently large and well-defined to make serious disputes an impossibility. From 1815 to 1918, for an entire century, the two countries have not gone to war, unless one uses the term to characterize the small Roman expedition of 1849; and twice, they have even been allies. In fact it might be considered an exaggeration to say that they were at war prior to 1815 since it was the Holy Empire with whom the armies of the Revolution crossed swords. The one Italian power which opposed a systematic resistance to the invasion

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was the kingdom of Piedmont. The French armies found in Italy nothing similar to that which awaited them in Spain or Russia. All in all, the French Revolution brought the two countries together in a collaboration which has been more or less amical, more or less close at certain moments, but which has never been interrupted. The two nations ought to have been, since the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, continuous friends.

It happened otherwise. While during the Eighteenth Century no trace of Gallophobia was to be found in Italy, during the Nineteenth Italian opinion was periodically being shaken by spasms of anti-French frenzy, the violence of which was frequently out of proportion to the incidents which had provoked them. These spasms though becoming feebler and more infrequent, have not yet entirely ceased and bewilder the French as if they were insoluble puzzles. If there

is a sentiment which appears to them to be independent of accident, it is this inexplicably passionate fear of France.

To us, however, it seems independent only because we have forgotten that it is necessary to seek for the remote cause in a reaction of the national temper that occurred more than a century ago. One must go back to the beginning of the Nineteenth Century and to the twenty years of French occupation.

It is perhaps astonishing that a reaction should, in a certain degree, persist for more than a century. Bonaparte, the cisalpine republic, the kingdom of Italy and Murat — they seem very far away. But their influence endures still. In the course of these twenty years, virtually all the states of the old régime disappeared from the peninsula in order to make room for new productions — republics or kingdoms. The ancient sacerdotal and

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aristocratic organization of Italian society was destroyed in its entirety; power and culture passed into new hands. Fortunes were overturned; the Church was almost completely despoiled; many noble families became poverty-stricken; the *nouveaux riches* multiplied; manners and ideas changed; the old industries disappeared; the provincial capitals, still so brilliant during the latter half of the Eighteenth Century, began to yield place to a few larger cities. The populace found itself suddenly faced with new obligations like military service as well as enormous fiscal charges which had to be counterbalanced by a new political organization which they understood badly.

When the Directory entered into the affairs of Italy it did not foresee such an upheaval. Bonaparte had no notion of it when he crossed the Alps. It came as a surprise to everybody, sponsors and victims; but what

resentment it left behind! This tremendous revolution from outside to which the country had submitted with neither desire nor foresight nor preparation, had its victims and its favorites. But if the former were bound to detest the nation which had encompassed their downfall, France could not count on the gratitude of her beneficiaries once the Napoleonic régime had fallen.

Thus Gallophobia was born in Italy and transmitted from generation to generation by means of literary and political tradition. It became extremely violent in the generation which watched the downfall of Napoleon and the one which followed; it has progressively grown feebler but it is not yet dead. It withstood the alliances of 1859 and 1915. It might appear to be a freak of collective enmities; it is a remnant of forgotten historical events which has outlived their memory.

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If this survival can last for more than a century between two peoples who have never been enemies and who have twice been allies, how much more profound must be the enmity between peoples who have been in permanent or periodic conflict during the whole of the Nineteenth Century. But if these hatreds are more intense their character is not different. Peoples, like individuals, possess a certain vanity which leads them to attribute to themselves a real or imaginary superiority over the others. And if this vanity can engender antipathy or hate, neither antipathy nor hate can provoke wars unless political interests have fanned them into flame. It is then that the danger commences, because sometimes they become stronger than the interests and finally act as causes of war by themselves.

During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Europe resembled the America

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of the present day, where there exists between the various peoples an inoffensive spirit of rivalry and antagonism. An Argentine does not hesitate to make fun of a Brazilian; the Brazilian delights in emphasizing everything obnoxious or disagreeable in the Argentine without causing a fear to arise that this state of mind might start a war. The vanity of European nations under the old régime was not as vigorous as it is to-day in contemporary America. Nations knew less of one another and had fewer contacts. There were wars then, but it was the kings and courts and states which fought through their armies. The people were simply spectators.

With the French Revolution this indifference disappeared. The great political wars provoked by the struggle between liberalism and absolutism, between monarchical principles and democratic principles, com-

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menced. The great dynasties of Europe fought with so much obstinacy against Napoleon because they did not want in the middle of Europe a powerful dynasty of a revolutionary origin which would substitute for time-honored law the authority of the sword. Europe enjoyed peace between 1815 and 1848 because during these thirty-three years both the great monarchies and the small, bound by a solid entente, were sure of their power and had no need of military prestige to govern. War commenced again after 1848 because the conflict between absolutism and liberalism, between the monarchic and democratic principles, intensified. In order to carry on these wars, however, states were compelled to draft their peoples and encourage their enmities; for the military system imposed on Europe by the French Revolution had changed the old conflict between states and sovereigns into wars

ABEL AND CAIN

between peoples in which each individual was a soldier not by profession but by civic duty. The exploitation of national hatreds was bound up with this profound transformation of the military system, wherein the professional honor and efficiency of soldiers under the old régime had to be replaced in part by an outburst of vulgar passion. Nations did not go to war because they hated one another; they hated one another because they had to go to war.

The question of peace and war in Europe thus reduces itself to finding out if the great political struggle which underlay all the wars of the Nineteenth Century has yet reached a stage where intellectual disarmament, at least between the stronger European nations, might be possible. How can there be doubt about it when one observes that all the revolutions which, during the first twenty years of the Twentieth Century,

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caused so many thrones to topple over from the Baltic to the Yellow Sea, comprise a unity? Or that they constitute the detached episodes of a great historic movement, which tends to put Europe and Asia in a situation analogous to that of the American continent, dividing them up into a large, and for the most part republican group of states which will find themselves, rich and poor and great and small alike, on a basis of political equality, more and more independent of all the hierarchical forms of tutelage, protection and reciprocal guidance? Or that even the Germany of the Hohenzollerns has put on the Phrygian liberty cap; or that the German Republic wobbles daily but does not fall? Or that we are observing a tremendous democratization which is swallowing up the great empires of the world?

CHAPTER FOUR

Delusions of World Unity

The Ruler of the World

I REALIZE that many people are going to disagree with these assertions of mine. They have a more or less fixed idea of world unity and world necessity, but they conceive of it only under an imperial guise, as a hegemony spreading little by little over the whole earth. Now that the World War has destroyed the ancient supremacy of Europe over Africa, Asia, Oceania and a portion of America; now that it has jeopardized the British sea

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supremacy every one is anxiously asking which nation is to be the future ruler of the world, and by what effort of arms, money and diplomatic ruses it will give sovereign authority to its decrees. Because the world will have need of a ruler....

Is the United States to be the chosen people of the new era? A great many votes favor the choice. Fabulously wealthy even before the War, the United States was then in debt to Europe. To-day, they are the creditors of the universe, capitalists of the world. The Russian Revolution conveniently rid them of their most formidable competitor in the production of certain raw materials of inestimable value: cereals and gasoline. In the last fifty years they have not only been industrious, but they have also been assiduous in learning. They possess a higher culture. Their naval strength is almost equal to that of England. Being the only republic

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in the world that is more than a hundred years old, they have settled the problem on which Germany, Russia and Italy have scarcely commenced to try their strength. Rich and powerful, cultivated and free, endowed with political institutions of proven worth, situated between an exhausted Europe and an Asia which is waking up fitfully, they might seem to be the future arbiters of the globe.

Japan the mysterious worries others. The War enriched her, she has made herself one of the three great maritime powers and she has succeeded in freeing herself from the Muscovite monster which threatened to swallow her up. Certain political and intellectual circles are wondering what would happen if Japan succeeded in getting hold of China and making a great modern state of it under her direction. The whole planet would be shaken.

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There are also people who hope for or dread Russian supremacy. The enigmatic government in Moscow already rejoices, in Western imaginations, in a kind of diabolic ubiquity. Wherever a war bursts out, or a revolution or even a riot, in Bulgaria, China, Turkey, Egypt, or Morocco, evidences of its action, its influence, its money, its imperceptible emissaries, are seen. It plays somewhat the rôle of evil genius in the drama of our epoch, perhaps destined to ultimate extinction but certainly more lively and vigorous than the nonchalant good genius. Those who attribute this ubiquity to it are easily led to imagine that Moscow dreams of world empire and could achieve it by means of world revolution. The French Revolution remains still, for the modern spirit, a model from which nations can draw any number of answers if they wish it.

The World War, by shattering, the su-

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premacY of Europe, left a void in the universe. We seek to guess what new supremacy can fill this void quite as if the world were destined eternally to live under the hegemony of one power or a group of privileged powers.

But, does the world really need a ruler? Might not European supremacy in the Nineteenth Century have been an isolated occurrence, a historical novelty, ordained to come to an end at the same time as the circumstances which determined it?

The United States have become a formidable industrial, naval, and financial power. On this point every one is in accord. Nevertheless it does not prove that the United States could assume direction of world affairs. If its wealth is enormous, the power of money, in the larger affairs of the world, is limited. Capital obeys its own laws; it goes where it hopes to find more instead of

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where there are most important political interests to defend. If, in a certain degree, it can help a government to attain certain ends, never does it consent to sacrifice itself to political exigencies; and in so far as it is a means of domination, it has its weaknesses. The creditor possesses the debtor, but the debtor also possesses the creditor. A creditor power has a means of pressure against its debtor or debtors; but it is also linked up with them by a solidarity of interests which can considerably embarrass its political action. It cannot do harm without harming itself.

It is not easy for a European to guess what rôle Japan will be able to play in Asia and indirectly, in the rest of the world. Entering the World War as an average power, Japan emerged from it one of the greatest. The impression is inescapable that in the field of action which ought to be most favorable for

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it, China, it is going to run against invisible obstacles. Employing a European method of reasoning, all the nations are waiting to see Japan profit from the anarchy in China by pillaging it wholesale. Japan acts in Chinese affairs with a prudence which can only be explained by assuming that impossibilities underlie the misleading appearance of the yellow chaos. The respective strength and weakness of Japan and China may not be as great as they seem to us—remote and ill-informed spectators.

As to the revolutionary hegemony of Russia, it would seem to belong with the dreams which delight Western intellectualism, intoxicated by historic precedents. The causes which gave the French Revolution a world-wide scope were exceptional, just as were the circumstances which produced the astonishing development of the Nineteenth Century. Powerful as Europe is, it cannot,

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within the span of little more than a century, produce two revolutions of a universal character.

The truth was guessed twenty years ago by one of the most illustrious champions of imperialism of the past generation, Lord Cromer, the British pro-consul in Egypt: Western civilization is the negation of imperialism, on account of the total and virtually organic impossibility of compelling obedience in which it hopelessly flounders. For three centuries the Western mind has produced only doctrines of criticism and makes only revolutions, the end of which is to rouse all the active energies of individuals and peoples. The Protestant Reformation, the development of science, the philosophies of the Eighteenth Century, the French Revolution, the parliamentary system, democratic dogma and institutions, industry, and America have engendered the anarchistic in-

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dividualism which is the body and soul of the West, in the family, in art, in religion, in philosophy, in the state, in economy and social life. Freed from the bonds which held it, human energy has taken a tremendous step forward; but mankind has become harder to govern. Western culture is a powerful vehicle of the critical and revolutionary spirit which nibbles at the states and empires founded in Asia and Africa by the West. The moment a people is occidentalized, it revolts against the Occident.

Rome was able to give a language and ideas and customs to a great number of peoples because never did its subjects seek to use against it arms which Roman civilization had furnished. But at the present time ...observe what has happened during the past century in China. As long as China remained faithful to its old civilization, as long as it resisted railroads and other inven-

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tions of Western engineering, as long as it continued to obey the Son of Heaven and to be governed by its mandarins, it bowed, particularly after 1840, with all the docility it could muster, to the frequently brutal influence of Europe. The Court and the mandarins understood how dangerous it would have been to resist powers, which they considered barbarians, that were armed to the teeth. Still having authority, the monarchy and the bureaucracy forced the people to make sacrifices of pride and money necessary to satisfy the "devils," the "vampires," the "barbarians" of the West.

Thus it was that Europe and later, following its example, Japan, were able to humiliate, ransom and destroy the ancient empire without incurring serious risks. After the unhappy war with Japan, however, the new generation awoke in China. American and European ideas percolated into the

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higher classes, railroads multiplied, industry developed on a large scale, the monarchy fell, the old social organization fell to pieces. At the same time what we call a national conscience, a desire for independence and equality, as well as hatred for Europe became widespread and, the monarchy overturned, burst into action. In proportion to its Europeanization, China wanted to become a free and independent state like all the European states, great or small. It became more and more obvious that Europe had been dreaming pleasantly when it hoped that the Orientals would borrow from our civilization only that which would help us to enrich ourselves more easily at their expense and would make them our docile subjects.

To found empires under such conditions is to build on shifting sands. The void caused in the world by what one might call

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the deflation of European supremacy will be filled by no new hegemony. We are moving towards a world without directing centers, a world divided into a large number of states, great or small, each one of which will exist for its own sake, submitting less and less to the political influence of its neighbors. The last column that supported European imperialism was pulled down in the overthrow of the monarchical system, the initiative for which was taken by Asia with the Turkish Revolution of 1908 and the Chinese Revolution of 1912. As long as virtually all of Europe and all of Asia were governed by monarchies, great or small, absolute or constitutional, but always powerful enough to be able to impose their wills on the national sentiment, states could easily exercise a controlling influence on feebler states through the intervention of the Court. The whole system of European influence in Asia, like

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the entire hierarchy of governed and governing powers in Europe, depended on dynastic politics. South America had already escaped the political influence of Europe in the Nineteenth Century and submitted only to its financial and intellectual influence. Why? Because it was governed by republics. The great monarchies of Europe found in these republics no point of contact on which to exercise a political influence.

This explains why in Turkey and in China opposition to Europe paved the way for republics. At first the Republic of Angora and the Republic of Peking caused some amusement in Europe: they were seen as awkward antics of stupid pupils who were attempting to copy from models quite incomprehensible to them. It may have been that the Turkish and Chinese republicans knew what they were doing better than their critics in Europe supposed. The republic has

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been, in both countries, little but a weapon in the war of nationalism against foreign influence.

Such is then the function of republican institutions almost everywhere. The republic is a form of government far more national than a monarchy, which by its very nature must tend towards a kind of cosmopolitanism or universality superior to national varieties. It is for that reason that between 1815 and 1848, in the splendid period of the monarchy, the dynasties were exceedingly jealous of the supernational and universal and European character of the monarchic principle; and they fought everywhere the movement of nationalities which were awakening with vague republican aspirations. The decline of the monarchy began in Europe after 1848 when two dynasties — Savoy and Hohenzollern — sought to identify themselves with two national move-

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ments, to take the reins and become, as one says to-day, "Nationalists." The nationalist monarchy, standing between two opposing and contradictory forces, was an artificial compromise which could not last for long and which, in Germany, has already arrived at its inevitable solution. In 1866 William the First, who was then simply King of Prussia, was right when he said to Bismarck apropos of his intention to declare war on Austria, after bringing up the question of universal suffrage: "But it's revolution that you propose to me." The republic was the logical conclusion of premises laid down by the policy of Bismarck and by the 1848 revolution which made this policy possible.

Let us not ask ourselves, then, who is going to be, to-morrow, ruler of the world, because the world of to-morrow will belong to no ruler. It will be divided up into a great number of races, states, civilizations, each

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race, each state, each civilization seeking to be sufficient unto itself. But here an objection immediately presents itself, and it appears to be insuperable. Is not this pulverization of states and peoples the opposite of European and world unity? Instead of unifying the world is there not going to be a repetition of the Tower of Babel, with a second confusion of tongues?

CHAPTER FIVE

The Tower of Babel

UNFORTUNATELY the contradiction seems undeniable. After the French Revolution Europe became a Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues increased with each generation. Confusion was never so great as subsequent to the War, which had been undertaken to demolish the tower. The problem of languages and nationalities is mixed in it, as is that of liberty. Why is it that, after having called upon nations to fight for lib-

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erty and independence, after having hailed with such enthusiasm the victory of justice and right, dictatorships multiply, the régime of terror and intimidation spreads, and the lamentations of oppressed classes and peoples break out stronger than ever from one end of Europe to the other?

The riddle appears obscure to the numerous followers of *Œdipus* who would like to solve it: but is it after all what it appears to be? The victors believed, in 1918, that the War settled the two problems—that of liberty and that of nationalities. It did, on the contrary, no more than advance them for us to solve if we possess the capability. Europe created after 1915, by a combination of the dynastic and national principles, a most ingenious balance of rights and interests. Thanks to this equilibrium, throughout Europe with the exception of Russia and Turkey, all classes ended by enjoying a cer-

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tain liberty and all nations a certain security in the exercise of their national rights. The one exception was Poland, persecuted by a cruel fate for more than a century. In all other states, the political rights of the numerically largest classes, like the national rights of races excluded from state control, were limited but, within their limits, well guaranteed.

The revolutions of 1917 and 1918 and the peace treaties of 1919 destroyed both this equilibrium and the limitations which supported it. But can it be said that, thanks to this destruction, all classes and all peoples gained an extension of rights which had been narrowly restrained under the old monarchical régime in Europe? It cannot. They gained only the chance to construct broader rights on the ruins of dead monarchies. First, however, they must learn to govern, which is harder and more complicated than

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the overthrow of a dynasty. Many races subservient to the old Europe have thrown off the yoke of monarchical authority but also they have lost the protection which this supernational authority gave them against stronger races.

Every limitation is also a support. Thus there were limitations which the old monarchical Europe placed on the political rights of the masses and the national rights of peoples. To-day these limitations have disappeared; classes and peoples find themselves with ill-defined rights, in a condition of theoretical liberty which consists solely of the possibility of struggling to extend them as far as the suppression of antagonistic rights.

The temptation to abuse their liberty, particularly in the realm of languages, has been very great for stronger nations. The monarchical system gone, Europe swarms with republics which find it hard to govern them-

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selves, if they want to keep from falling under the rule of military dictators, by the parliamentary system. Unity of language, however, is far more essential to parliamentary republics than to constitutional or absolute monarchies. The system of representation is not easy in application, even in countries which possess a time-honored unity of race and tongue; but the instant a diversity of tongues is added, difficulties increase....

So it is not surprising that in new and polyglot states, attempts are being made rapidly to unify language by means of administrative pressure, that is to say, by force under various guises. For fifty years Europe, under the influence of different ideas and doctrines, lost almost everywhere the notion of what force can or cannot do. Mystic faith in the efficacy of force, with which the Germans were generally reproached during the

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War, is a widespread malady. And the complaints of peoples who are being constrained to abandon the language of their fathers are everywhere to be heard.

The unity of Europe and of the world demands, then, the worst tyranny of all — that peoples be compelled to change their language? No. If violence has its place in the unification of the world, philological violence is useless because it is a chimera. It leads nowhere. Peoples alter their language, but spontaneously and slowly. No political or military force is capable of constraining them. If history furnishes a proof of a universal and eternal truth, it is that. Particularly the history of Rome.

Rome accomplished, in the course of its long career, an immense unification of languages. It commenced with Italy. What an assortment of tongues existed in the narrow peninsula when Rome was still only a very

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small central Italian power! Little by little, Etruscan and Greek, Italian dialects of the center and Celtic dialects of the north yielded to the language of the people which had become dominant. Spontaneity and slowness were, however, the two essential characteristics of this great transformation. Never did the government at Rome take pains to encourage the study of Latin or to prevent the study of competitive languages. Always natural forces, that is to say the interests of the subject peoples were permitted to hold sway, and were given the necessary time. In the Augustan age, Greek was still widely spoken in Southern Italy. *Bilinguis Apulia*, said Horace of his country.

With the Empire, Latin spread over the whole of Roman Europe and North Africa, displacing dialects and national languages in the African provinces, in Spain, in Gaul, in Pannonia, throughout the entire Balkan

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Peninsula. The section of Europe where Latin tongues are now spoken represents only a portion of the immense territory over which, during the first centuries of the Empire, Latin triumphed. But this philological victory, too, was spontaneous and slow. Rome never had the curious idea of forcing peoples subject to them to use the language of the sovereign people.

Another proof of this great phenomenon is furnished us by the recent history of certain European states. It is well known that a part of present-day Prussia, particularly in the northern and eastern sections, was peopled by Slavs not many centuries ago. At the Congress of Vienna Prussia was still considered a state more Slav than Germanic. A section of the population of Poland—the furthest from the center—was slowly Germanized by a natural process of absorption which became less efficacious the closer it

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came to the compact mass of historic Poland. At a certain instant Polish nationalism offered resistance to slow and spontaneous Germanization; finally, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, recourse was had to forced Germanization but with no results except to excite further Polish nationalism.

The laws promulgated by Russia and Prussia to deracinate the Poles are decisive witnesses of the uselessness of this type of politics. The failure of Germany is particularly illuminating. Germany did have, in its coercive action, the advantage of possessing a high culture. Had force been of any assistance to intelligence in uprooting an ancient language this time it should have been strikingly successful. But its use served merely to diminish the attraction which German culture, had it been presented without the assistance of bailiffs and policemen, might have possessed for the Polish mind.

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It is common knowledge that every human being learns his native language without appreciable effort, because he learns it gradually; the study of a foreign language on the other hand is painful and boring work, exacting an intense effort of will. If many people are making that effort to-day, it is because they have a definite reason: the desire for knowledge, for example, or the ambition for material gain. It is childish to suppose that millions of men can be made to do it, without passion or interest, by simple intimidation.

Peoples change language only by degrees and when they discover an appreciable advantage in so doing; and the transition is always represented by a period when the majority speaks both languages; the old which it is about to abandon and the new which it intends to adopt. *Bilinguis Apulia*, says Horace; it was his way of telling us

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that in his epoch Greek was dying out of Southern Italy. To-day the same phenomenon may be seen happening in America. Of the immigrants from Europe, the first generation, the generation which reached an adult age before it arrived in the New World, speaks its native language with fluency and learns English or Portuguese or Spanish with more or less facility. The second generation, which is born in the country, still speaks the two languages but while its knowledge of English, Portuguese or Spanish is excellent, it speaks the original language of its parents badly. The third generation understands only the language of the country.

Yes, it is certain: languages and races, especially in central Europe, are too largely intermingled. Philological variety is too easily transformed under the pressure of politicals into moral bankruptcy. The danger is obvious: and it rightly disturbs far-sighted

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minds. The ideal would be to have European languages ultimately grouped into compact masses covering territories with specific limits. This unification, however, could be the work only of time and of historic forces acting spontaneously. Political force remains powerless against the curse of Babel, which has persecuted man since the dawn of history.

Time is needed: that is to say, patience and freedom. Unity of language can come only by gradual stages out of a moral unity that is destined everywhere to grow stronger regardless of conflicting hatreds, political pulverization and the multiplication of governing centers. Not Europe alone, but the whole world is to find an increasingly powerful agent of unity in a few ideas, good or bad, which are common to all latitudes, to all races. I shall cite two of them: the democratic idea and the belief in progress. The

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idea that a government should represent the will of the people has many enemies in Europe. Italy swarms with youthful prophets, rocked in the Nietzschean cradle, who preach a crusade against this doctrine and denounce it as a scourge of civilization. If they are correct, then I am very much afraid that its ravages have only just begun. Although it has already given birth to a certain number of horribly despotic governments, it is expanding and stirring the breasts of millions of men of all colors with the earnest hope of a better future. Even if it does eventually result in general catastrophe, the movement has assumed throughout the world such terrific proportions that the objections and invectives of the intellectual classes of Europe are no longer sufficiently powerful to arrest it.

The idea of progress, as created by the Twentieth Century, has commenced to pene-

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trate the depths of Asia. It is a simple and elemental idea, far simpler and more elemental than that of popular sovereignty although it is challenged less by European intellectuals; for it reduces itself to an optimistic and rather naïve belief that everything that increases our wealth and our power, makes us better. And it is an idea which, in all probability, contains in its naïveté far greater perils than does the notion of a sovereign people: but it does possess an invincible and seductive attraction for the mass mind. It is not surprising that it is beginning to spread to the ancient races of the Asiatic continent, until recently attached to traditions of a far more profound wisdom.

Who can say whether the world, unified by these ideas, is going to be more happy or less than it was fifty years ago? The question cannot be answered; and even if it could be, the answer would be of no great impor-

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tance. The forces which govern the world to-day are so tremendous that our desire for happiness is quite powerless to stop or to guide them.

CHAPTER SIX

Sovereignty of the People and Its Two Minds

“EVEN if it eventually results in general catastrophe”...I said. Certainly the democratic idea is both one of the most powerful unifying forces of the modern world and one of the most dangerous. Let us try to understand how this idea, and all the realities dependent upon it, are at one and the same time a necessity and a peril. It will be more worth our while than losing time in one of the eternal and useless discussions

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which so delight the parties of the left and right.

Sovereignty of the people is the doctrine of political rationalism which supplanted, during the Nineteenth Century, all the mystical doctrines of the State. Men have never conceived of authority except as a proxy from God or from the people. These two theories are the opposing principles towards which tend, respectively, the mystic and rationalistic doctrines of the State: there are no other principles, and the mixed systems whereby people have sought to reconcile them, have sometimes mitigated but never extinguished, their irreconcilable antagonism. This antagonism, inherent in the very essence of the two principles, never for an instant ceased to trouble Nineteenth Century Europe. As belief in the divine right of kings grew feebler, popular sovereignty became a reality, acting with greater force.

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Political rationalism is no longer linked up with religious incredulity, because to-day it can ally itself to the most robust dogmatic belief without the slightest difficulty. The governing classes of the Eighteenth Century, in Catholic and Protestant countries alike, were more skeptical than those of the Nineteenth. But this skepticism had not, until the French Revolution, seriously shaken the divine right of kings. The philosophic movement which prepared for the great earthquake at the end of the century, had never attacked it directly.

During the first half of the Nineteenth Century, a section of the upper classes, both in Catholic and Protestant Europe, became reconciled with God. The divine right of kings, however, profited but little from this religious renaissance. The renewed fervor with which Catholics and Protestants believed after 1815 in the dogma of the Church

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or the teachings of Calvin and Luther did not carry them to the point of believing that a family might possess the supernatural right of managing without control all the affairs of their country. A sense of reality and a spirit of criticism were too lively among the upper, and even among the religious, classes for them to consider politics as anything but a system of human calculations and profane passions having nothing in common with faith except a duty to respect the divine laws. The attempts of the Catholic Church to sustain absolutism during the first half of the Nineteenth Century was bound to fail. The current of realities was carrying the age in the opposite direction.

Lamennais is the Nineteenth Century writer to whom this conflict within the modern conscience (compelled to laicize politics even when, perhaps especially when, most enflamed by religious zeal) is clearest

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and most alive. Two of his pages, written ten years apart, show us in graphic abridgment, the greatest political crisis of our civilization.

In 1823, in an article published to commemorate the death of Louis XVI, Lamennais said:

“May kings learn what they are: ministers of the Divine goodness; trustees of God’s power. They received it from Him, they cannot alienate Him. Royalty is a true political priesthood; it can no more be despoiled than can the religious priesthood. Both are divine in origin, in purpose; both, although in different ways, derive from the same source; and the one is king as the other is priest, not for himself but for the people, whom he is chosen to lead, to *save*. Power never ceases to belong to God; never does it become the property of him who uses it. A king is not merely a powerful man. What is

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the power of a man? He is, we repeat, *the minister* of God; and I say it to-day, Louis XVI perished simply because he wanted to be only a man, when he had been commanded to be a king."

"This is what has made of his death a calamity such as no other nation has ever known. With him perished royalty, and since then we have known anarchy, despotism, everything...."

It would be difficult to express with more force and ardor the doctrine of the divine right of kings. However this is what Lamennais wrote ten years afterwards, in the *Livre du Peuple*:

"People, harken to what they say of you, to what they compared you."

"They said that you were a flock, and they were your shepherds; you, the brute, they, the man. To them belongs, therefore, your

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fleece, your milk, your flesh. Graze under their sheep-hooks....”

“They said also that royal authority was like that of a father over his minor children. Without liberty, then, without privilege, the people, eternally incapable of reason, lives in utter dependence upon its prince, who disposes of it and of everything as he pleases. Servitude and misery forever!”

“Some acknowledge force to be the sole arbiter of society.... Poor people, they press you and oppress you: of what do you complain? In your candid simplicity you ask of tyranny its reasons. Don’t you see them everywhere? Don’t you see these bayonets gleaming in the sun, these cannons leveled on the market place?”

“Others imagined that authority rightfully belonged to certain races of a more perfect endowment or that God conferred it Himself, either to individuals chosen for certain

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ends or to families destined to hold it in perpetuity...they called this the Divine Right."

"People, close your ears to these lies. Let the impious blaspheme the Father of mankind and learn to understand His veritable laws, to understand your right to conquer impiety."

"All men are born equal and, in consequence, independent of one another: nobody brings with him into the world the right to command. If everybody, originally, was bound to obey the will of another, moral liberty would not exist...."

"For personal independence and sovereignty are one and the same thing.... Sublime attribute of the intelligence, self-mastery, or liberty, is the distinguishing mark between man and brute, yoked to fatality, dragged by fatality around the sphere of its blind existence, as the celestial

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bodies within their strictly determined orbits.”

“No man can part with his sovereignty because he cannot forswear his nature without ceasing to be a man; and from the sovereignty of each individual there is born in society the collective sovereignty of all, or the sovereignty of the people, inalienable in equal measure.”

The recantation is complete. Why within ten years time does the eloquent writer transfer from God to the people the inalienable power which is the source of authority, with the same logic, passionate and fearless to the point of absurdity? Simply because during these ten years the 1830 Revolution had overturned the elder branch of the Bourbon family. An ardent Catholic, a lover of all the intangible realities—truth, justice, order, authority—could still recognize Louis XVIII and Charles X as “minis-

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ters of God." A lengthy past attested, and the bloody interruption of the Revolution confirmed, their supernatural mission in the government of France in the eyes of all believers in legitimacy. But could Louis Philippe be recognized as a "minister of God" or an "anointed of the Lord"? Vulgar manipulation, which had anointed him on the barricades, was too obvious. Paris, France, Europe had seen a banker, M. Lafitte, and a small parliamentary coterie crown the newcomer king, no longer of France, but of the French. After the days of July the monarchy ceased to be a supernatural institution based on a mystic principle; it became one of the numerous human political agencies ingeniously contrived so as to maintain a certain equilibrium between the discordant forces of a ragged epoch. To mix up the Holy Ghost in this kind of juggling would have been a sacrilege. And the earnest soul of the great

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writer who sought as source of authority a coherent principle and not a contradictory expedient, turned to the opposing doctrine — the sovereignty of the people — which alone could satisfy his need of logic and coherence and greatness.

The *volte-face* of world temper was much slower than that of Lamennais; but it obeyed the same logic of unreal realism that dominated all the Nineteenth Century. As the monarchy, after 1848, became a human tool, esteemed by its results, the doctrine of popular sovereignty marched unhesitatingly towards its ultimate conclusion, at once logical and absurd: universal suffrage for men and women. If power has to-day been delegated to the people, can the people be recognized except in the totality of men and women? This logic of principle, imperative and sterile as well, has democratized more or less, during the half century which preceded the

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World War, all the states of Europe, causing even the most conservative — Austria for example — to adopt universal suffrage. Now that war and revolution have scattered to the winds the most powerful European dynasties, universal suffrage has conquered, almost invisibly, the sovereign situation conceded by Lamennais in his impassioned apostrophes after the episode of July. Kings having disappeared, the command had to pass to the people, impersonal sovereigns, sacred sources of legitimacy.

Suddenly, however, the world found itself faced with a difficulty it had never imagined.

The principle of popular sovereignty goes back to Greek and Roman antiquity. Nevertheless the sovereign peoples of antiquity consisted in an *élite* of carefully selected free-men. In Rome this *élite* was dominated by an aristocracy, a true elect of the elect. Tradi-

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tions, laws, religious belief, ignorance, poverty, consciousness of human frailty surrounded the will of this collective sovereign with limitations and multiple barriers.

In Europe and America universal suffrage is the triumph of the masses, of number, of quantity. This collective sovereign is a kind of monster, with an enormous body, a small head, paws that are sometimes sharp; a monster which is accustomed to wallow in heavy slumber and let itself docilely be led, like a lamb by a child. Nevertheless it is sometimes seized by fits of fury; it bellows, it bites, it belches flames; and the hardest tamers are unsuccessful in calming it. Its intelligence is as limited as a child's; to make it understand anything you have to simplify — even questions which are comprehensible only in their complexity. It is easily dazzled, easily deceived, even easily astonished, but it has got into its head a vague conviction that

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it is all-powerful, a notion fostered by its ignorance. It has no precise idea of the chains of bronze that bind the actions of men in this wretched world enslaved to causality; it easily imagines that error, folly, ignorance, waste, produce none of the consequences of which they admit; it willingly allows itself to be carried by its illusions and by the rhetoric of its admirers into a dream world where the mere wishing for a thing is sufficient for its realization.... And there is neither limit nor direction to its erratic will: neither tradition nor religious faith nor undisputed philosophic principles, nor solid institutions nor compulsions which it recognizes as being superior to its powers.

In such conditions many are asking if the world can still be governed, and in what manner. Uncontrolled universal suffrage, in the disordered and disequibrated condition of the present-day world, seems to them

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chaotic and always menacing, potent with surprises of an unpleasant kind. Should it then be held in check? That is what partisans of dictatorships advise. It is, however, difficult to perceive on what ground these dictatorships could rest in order to impose so violent a remedy. It is impossible to hold in millions of people by terror because the more violent the pressure is the faster does it exhaust its means of action.

Others place their hope in an intellectual and moral revolution which would overturn the doctrine of popular sovereignty. If such a revolution were possible and imminent, we would find ourselves at one of the turning points of history which make guesswork impossible. Political rationalism, dominant to-day, would be replaced by a new form of mysticism: who could guess what upheavals would accompany such a change?

Instead of trying to envisage hypotheses so

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risky, it would perhaps be better to ask if the composition of universal suffrage should not be included among the problems left us as a legacy by the World War. In England, France, Switzerland and Germany, parties had organized, even before the War, great national conferences on the subject of suffrage; but was the organization sufficient, or is it still? Should not what already exists be perfected and what does not exist be created in order to give universal suffrage a clarity of perception, a weight and coherence which would be less disproportionate to the task it is called upon to fill?

The future of Europe depends on the answer it gives to these two questions. But this answer cannot be easily made, for in order seriously to organize universal suffrage it is necessary also to guard it against errors; to attempt to make it certain that the *profound and permanent will* of the people will always

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triumph over its *fleeting and capricious will*.

These two wills exist also in individuals. The permanent will is the one which impels us towards the essential ends of our existence — our work, our family, our social rôle, large or small. But the permanent will is often sidetracked by momentary passions — loves, hates, ambitions, rivalries, enthusiasms — which, though usually of short duration, sometimes have the violence of a cyclone. These passions often cause a man to commit folly which destroys the work of his permanent will. A man of strength and wisdom is one whose profound and permanent will retains control always over his fleeting and capricious will.

The same is true of nations. A permanent will keeps them to their historic mission. But nations also are susceptible to passing frenzies of love and hatred, to illusions and infatuations which distract them from their

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permanent work and compromise their future for years to come. In the present disordered state of the world, such seizures are more liable to happen and are more dangerous when they do. Universal suffrage can become, according to the moment, the organ either of the permanent and healthy will, or of destructive caprice.

Can the problem be solved? Will it be possible to create, besides universal suffrage, a suffrage more restrained, more select, more deliberate, less flighty, which could be the stable expression of the permanent and profound intention of a nation? Will it be possible to delegate to the assemblages which a more restrained suffrage would call into being, the authority necessary to correct the excesses, the precipitancy and incoherency of universal suffrage and the bodies which represent it, to offer resistance to universal suffrage when it lets itself be blinded by a

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dangerous caprice or a passing fancy, and to give it time for reflection and self-comprehension? Will a foundation which stays firm and unyielding to the incessant fluctuations of public spirit be found? It is possible that this foundation, buried more or less deeply, must exist. The problem is to find it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Negations of World Unity

a) The Question of the Seas

ONE of the wonderful pieces of good fortune we still enjoyed at the beginning of 1914 — privileged epoch though we never knew it — was the peace of the seas. For the first time in the history of the world, seas and oceans had been for a century sure and tranquil, common property of the human race. Pirates had disappeared even from the more distant and wilder seas; wars were rare, short and not particularly bloody; all

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seas and oceans were open to ships of all nations equally, large or small, powerful or feeble. On the sea peoples were equal: Scandinavians and British, descendants of Arminius and grandsons of Ulysses. Large fleets of war remained hidden in port. The English fleet came first, in numbers and reputation. Next to it was the German fleet, not as large but quite new, full of energy and impatient to try its mettle. After, came the American marine, imposing in the number of its ships and the strength of its armament; the French navy, rather slow in growth but illustrious in its traditions and memories, equipped with splendid ships and commanded by officers of tried ability; the Italian navy, youthful, rather unequal but plastic and growing in strength; the Russian, recovering from the wounds inflicted not long before by Japan; the Austrian, small but solidly entrenched in the Adriatic.

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Last of all, in the Far East, was the youngest child in the family, already celebrated and covered with laurels: the Japanese fleet.

But all these naval armies, regardless of ambitions and rivalries, maintained an even balance between themselves without recourse to war, in a tacit willingness common to all nations to respect the sea as a highroad for humanity. In books of jurists and ministerial archives there slumbered a vague law of war, confused and a trifle barbaric: but who worried about it? The world was happy in the security of all the seas, explored even to the remotest bay, cleansed of the last trace of piracy, open and free to all industrious nations.

Suddenly one day in 1914 the gates of the Apocalypse were thrown open. In the twinkling of an eye the seas and oceans were filled with dangers, defenses, restrictions, mines, torpedoes, ships visible and ships in-

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visible. Two powers, quite as if the seas belonged to them, barricaded and sowed with ambushes the common road of humanity, denying the right of neutrals to use it except under self-imposed conditions, one of them threatening confiscation, while the other announced the destruction of any ship which refused to obey. The frenzy of the battle decreed that any arms were good as long as they inflicted wounds. But the neutrals, constrained henceforth to navigate on mine-strewn waters, between two fires, bitterly complained. Most of them were too feeble to resist but the United States in order to protect its commerce engaged in long and bitter diplomatic discussions with Germany and England on the subject of the blockade and contraband, the use of submarines and the rights of belligerents and neutrals in naval warfare. In the Entente countries little was known about the discussions which

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took place in the early years of the War between the United States and England on the subject of the blockade and contraband; but they were numerous and sometimes very acrid.

In 1915 and 1916 America found herself in conflict with England and Germany both at the same time and for the same reasons with the result that she should logically have declared war on both of them.

Obliged, between two adversaries at war with one another, to choose an enemy or an ally America chose for ally the most accommodating of the two, the one most amenable to discussion and least violent and cruel. But why did she take up arms if not to protect the rights of belligerents and define the rights of neutrals, or — as she herself declared — to ensure the freedom of the seas? She went to war not only against ^{Germany} ~~England~~ but indirectly against her ally England as

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well, because the rights of neutrals, which America wanted to protect, had been flouted not only by Germany but also by England, though in a lesser degree.

This contradiction is the key to one of the puzzles which are profoundly troubling Europe; it might be called the misconstruction of American intervention in the War, which has weighed heavily on the world since 1918.

Having joined the conflict to defend the freedom of the seas, from whom should America have demanded the price of victory once the War was over? Not from Germany who had lost her fleet and was no longer, for the time being at least, a menace; but from England who after the destruction of the Russian, German and Austrian navies and the weakening of the French and Italian fleets was more powerful than ever and entirely free to use or abuse its strength on

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the sea. The freedom of the seas, for which America fought, became a phrase devoid of meaning if England would not consent to recognize that there existed a law of the seas and certain inviolable neutral rights. Germany, which after the armistice, also clamored for the freedom of the seas, changed her rôle from an enemy to an ally of America against England.

Every one knows what occurred. Lloyd George asked Clemenceau if the War could have been won without the assistance of the British fleet. The matter was not as simple as the British statesman imagined; and a precise answer would have had to have been qualified by a great number of conditional reservations. Nevertheless M. Clemenceau responded shortly in the negative and the seas were closed by the Peace Congress, that is to say abandoned without law or guarantee to the mercy of the victor. On the sea,

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however, there was only one victor.... Nobody realized it: President Wilson himself, after having tried to oppose an arrangement which spoiled all his plans, yielded and kept silent; the land and the sea, which in war-time had been united, in peacetime parted company as though their destinies were independent. Having abandoned the seas to England, American and European statesmen turned their attention to land and set about the task of arranging European affairs.

But to the great surprise of every one they were unsuccessful. All their efforts were sterile. Since that time the behavior of America has been to Europe an indecipherable enigma. It opposes all the plans and projects elaborated by Europe although its chief accepted all of them. It was in vain that America was invited to join the League of Nations; it answered that it had no desire to cripple its sovereignty. Vainly it was at-

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tempted to have America subscribe with England to a pact of guarantee favoring France and European equilibrium. The respect, the admiration, the sympathy even, which she felt before the war for Germany, came to life again in the resounding form of specie which poured out of her strong boxes in a steady stream to furnish credits. It was universally believed that America had already spontaneously given up the idea of exacting payment of her loans from her companions in arms. The world had to be convinced that America had never had the slightest idea of such a renunciation. Whereupon there rose from the whole, or almost the whole, of Europe, a murmur of disapprobation, an astonishment, a bad humor, an attitude of defiance, as though some unreasonable whim had been the reason for the refusal, or that it was due to some doubtful motive.

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Might it not have been, on the contrary, the direct consequence of the abandonment of the seas to the strongest power?

In declining to discuss the question of the seas did not the Peace Congress rob America of the fruits of her victory? Did she not decide to send a great army to Europe in the first place because she felt herself vitally threatened by the anarchy of the lawless and unlimited force which had been loosed on the seas? And with the German, Austrian and Russian navies destroyed and the French and Italian navies weakened, what did America accomplish, since the equilibrium and freedom of the seas was refused her, except to have increased, to her own detriment, the strength of England and Japan and to have made still more difficult the solution of the question for which she fought? Has she not been compelled, since 1919, to expend large sums in the construc-

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tion of a formidable navy in order to take the place of the vanished or depleted navies and to counterbalance the strength of England and Japan? Is not this the true spoils of war, the price of victory: less security and increased naval requirements.

Before the World War the oceans were secure. The world considered them to be a great watery highroad, accessible to all peoples under equal conditions. To-day worry, fear, distrust are in the saddle. It is known that one day Might will close the oceans; and all those who possess it, in small or large degree, attribute malevolent intentions to the others. . . .

A person who recalls all these things does not find it so strange or inexplicable after all that America has been so reluctant to cancel the debts. Could she make England a present of this money, to have new cruisers built for use perhaps against America? And,

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from the moment that she demanded payment from England did it not become awkward to cancel the debts of the others? It no longer seems difficult to understand why it has never been possible to obtain from America an alliance with England in the numerous combinations imagined as guarantees of European equilibrium and peace. Why should she promise in advance to intervene in European affairs according to a prescribed plan instead of resting free to determine each time whether it is convenient or not for her to cross the Atlantic, under conditions which seem to her the best? It is evident that America will have nothing to fear from Germany for a long time to come. The danger, on the contrary, or, if the word is too strong, a serious challenge and ground for precaution will come from England and Japan. In spite of the fact that America, too, has an interest in European

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tranquillity, it would be silly to pretend that this tranquillity is nearer to her heart than her own.

Some one told me that in London towards the latter part of 1918 President Wilson had a violent discussion with certain British statesmen and admirals on the question of the seas and, after he had threatened to return to America, one of the admirals present cried out, in a half-joking, half-earnest tone: "If we let you go!" I would not care to vouch for the authenticity of this story: but even if it is not historically true, it does contain a kind of symbolic verity. It well illustrates the singular nature of some of the requests and demands made of America by Europe.

In what far away backgrounds the great tragedy conceals itself, visible only to those who know how to seek it out!

The conquest of the seas is one of many

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victories completed by mankind in the past four centuries. In the course of these four hundred years mankind has exploited and explored them, scattering ports on every coast. Nations no longer dwell in isolated corners, mutually unaware, separated by space. The earth is a living unity, a single body, and the seas are the blood in its veins.

Humanity to-day has need not only of the land which it possesses and cultivates and exploits, but also of the seas, all the seas of the globe. But the seas are still less protected than the land against the tyranny of force. Up to 1914 we did not know it. We were still precariously innocent and ignorant in this regard. At present we know how easy it would be for a dictator of the sea to seize control of huge continents, if not of the entire earth.

It was not by chance that the World War, commenced as a renewal of the eternal duel

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between Latins and Germans on the Rhine border, to the oceans. It was not by chance that juridical controversies, apropos of the blockade, contraband, the right of vessels suspected or convicted of illicit traffic with the enemy to sail the seas, drew the United States to the battlefields of Champagne and Flanders. The earth being a unity, the bond between continents and seas is indestructible. Without a law of the seas dictated by accord or imposed by a balance of forces, the freedom of continents is even threatened because continents can no longer do without the seas. This bond is perhaps the greatest revelation of the World War.

The world seemed to understand it, in the midst of the armed conflict. President Wilson was not deceived when he sent soldiers across to fight for the liberty of the seas on European soil. But, the war over, the tired intelligence of Europe was be-

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fogged and lost sight of it. Statesmen again separated earth and sea, and the world fell back into disorder.

America, once she had returned home, sought to resolve the question of the seas alone, by launching first of all a navy capable of maintaining parity with those of England and Japan, and by then convoking at Washington a conference for the limitation of naval armaments. She was, however, able only to obtain an accord that was difficult, partial, temporary and probably not sincere, which scarcely touched upon questions of principle; a truce which postponed the danger of a struggle for the hegemony of the seas, or in other words the supreme death threat for occidental civilization.

In its turn Europe, detached from America, sought to effect a reorganization by herself; but what a difficult and wearisome task! Difficulties and dangers, worries and

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fears, multiply despite our best efforts. The task to which we are condemned seems to be that of Sisyphus. Without Europe America will not be able to settle the question of the freedom of the seas and, without America, Europe will not be able to find a new and stable equilibrium; because the sea which unites them divides the two worlds, the sea which divides them unites them.

When are the two continents going to understand the profundity of this truth and make of it a rule of conduct? The world, oceans and continents alike, is a unity. It will settle none of the problems which torment it until it has found again a clear perception of this unity.

CHAPTER EIGHT

World Americanization

SEVENTEEN years ago, towards the middle of February 1909, I arrived one morning in New York from Chicago. My trip to the United States was ended. The next day I was to sail for Europe. That evening I was invited by friends to dine in a club: during the meal they asked me many questions about my impressions of the trip. I summed them up somewhat as follows:

“I knew, before I came, that you were rich.

But, from the other side of the Atlantic, I imagined that your wealth would be a kind of enlarged replica of what I observed around me. But now I have seen your wealth and I see how badly the idea I had formed corresponds to the reality. You are much wealthier than people on the other side suppose, and you are in all likelihood wealthier than you yourselves dream of. That is my first conclusion.

“My second will seem more singular. I believe that, even though you are wealthier than Europe, you enjoy it less. From what I have been able to observe your common people live better than in Europe: but the middle and upper classes of Europe, though poorer, have a higher standard of living than here. The tales of the luxury of your millionaires and billionaires are legends believed by peoples who either have no idea of the nature of European luxury or else have never

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set foot in America. Except for the great gifts which they contribute to education or charity, your multimillionaires are Spartans compared to their European equivalent. But the difference is still more striking among the middle classes. They earn less, but they live more easily and agreeably.

“I could cite many facts in support of this assertion. I will limit myself to the most characteristic: domestic service. Here, in order to have a chambermaid and a cook, a family must be in exceedingly comfortable circumstances. The middle class, in general, cannot depend on any kind of permanent domestic service. In Italy a family of wage earners or intellectuals with an income of three or four thousand lire, can keep, for fifteen lire a month, a maid of all work. A family with a ten thousand lire income can afford a cook and a chambermaid because very good ones are obtainable at a salary of

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twenty-five or thirty lire a month. A family with twenty thousand can afford a man in addition. You can get whatever you want for fifty or sixty lire monthly.

"In France, England, and Germany wages are higher but nowhere does one find a situation similar to that of New York, where the most mediocre chambermaid commands at least forty dollars a month.

"In America, I have at last come to understand what a great privilege this abundance of servants, men and women, is for the middle and upper-middle classes of Europe. Can one use the term 'governing' of a class of which the most considerable and most cultivated part finds nobody to discharge the most humble functions of material existence for it? Furthermore I am returning to Europe changed into the most lenient of masters. As long as I live I shall consider a chambermaid or cook disposed to serve me

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zealously for so reasonable a salary, as a public benefit."

This question was discussed the entire evening, and the conclusion was finally reached that the reason for the difference was to be sought for in the wealth of America, the hugeness of which had so impressed me. Why was the United States so wealthy? Because the upper classes, instead of spending their enormous incomes on pleasure alone, invested the larger part in new enterprises; and because one section of the population, which in Europe was occupied in making easier or more agreeable the existence of the governing and intellectual classes, applied itself to work that was directly productive. The energetic progress of feminism in America seemed to us explicable in the same way. Why did the American woman, even in that era, prefer far more than her European sister, to work in industry or commerce

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or the liberal professions, instead of attempting to merit the eulogy of Latin inscriptions *Domui mansit, lanam fecit?* Simply because America incited everybody, men and women and rich and poor, to become direct producers of wealth.

These impromptu conclusions have no more worth to-day than would a historic recollection of a vanished age. The World War brought the two continents closer and caused the Atlantic to shrink in size, but if it achieved a slight Europeanization of America it Americanized Europe far more.

By snatching millions of men from their work to send them to fight in the trenches at the same time that it exacted a tremendous effort from industry and agriculture, the War transformed into direct producers — laborers or employees — a large number of men and women in Europe who hitherto had earned a living by making existence easier and more

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agreeable for the middle and upper classes. When the War ended, very few went back to their former occupations; and their example had its effect on the subsequent generations. The debts and ravages of the War, the increase in taxes and cost of living, the embarrassments in which certain classes had fallen and from which they were anxious to climb out, the comfort which other classes had attained and which they were anxious to retain, brought to the old world, too, an understanding of the singular condition of affairs which a European could observe in America, in 1910.

We have Americanized ourselves without realizing it. Domestic service, the agreeable privilege of a past age, has now become the insoluble problem of the entire middle class, as in America. As in America, women are assuming masculine prerogatives: they are invading all the professions, they want to

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work, to earn money, to lead independent lives. As in America, the large cities are becoming infected with a restlessness more and more inconvenient and intense, dirty, extravagant and breathless, which is called modern life in the hope of making it less insupportable. As in America, luxury is growing more democratic: while the lower classes accustom themselves to a better standard of living, the great European luxury, heritage of the aristocratic régimes of a past age, vanished along with the old fortunes, the old industries. In spite of the wastefulness of *nouveaux riches*, the traditions of luxury are lost and a relative simplicity has become obligatory, even for the wealthy, as in America. As in America, the astonishing combinations of a machinery that is almost supernatural, mass production, and the standardization of production and consumption are triumphant, and are snowing the

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diverse patterns of the old Europe under a blanket of increasing uniformity.

Americanization is one of the forms of world unification which is rapidly being felt both in democratic institutions and morals, and in the belief in progress as our generation understands it. It is useless to ask anew the question which we asked when first we spoke of the democratic idea and the idea of progress as unifying forces: whether they contribute or not to the welfare of the human race. We need only repeat what we said then: that the question is unanswerable and useless, because our welfare has little to do with these great historic changes. It is far more important that Europe should attempt to discover what are going to be the consequences and limitations of this Americanization; for, just because it is a form of world unification, the Americanization of Europe is an event rather more complicated than the

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easy optimism and sterile rhetoric of modern progress, which is contented when production increases and airplanes fly across oceans and continents at a dizzy speed, imagines.

Europe is not America. For a century an industrious and energetic people found themselves, in the United States, uniquely situated. It possessed huge fertile territories, with mines and forest lands in enormous quantity; it had the means to exploit them, and a political organization that was simple and solid. From generation to generation, as the means were being perfected, as the population increased, as capital accumulated, the exploitation of the continent bore results which were surprising even to American optimism. After 1850, European emigration furnished, to this fortunate country, laborers whose education had been paid for by their native states; almost a million yearly, in the years which preceded the World War. It was

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as though a million men were born yearly in the United States already adult, and ready to produce.

Add to that the fact that Americans lived and worked and laid plans for the future without threat of war. How often, when I was traveling in the United States before the great cataclysm, did I say to my friends: "You know, in theory, that wars may break out, but you have no idea what it means to live under the constant threat of a war which is bound to come but nobody knows when, or how, or what will be the consequences. All that anybody knows is that it will endanger the fate and existence of every one. It is the tragic lot of Europe."

The Americans have no reason to worry about revolutions. They know that revolutions break out from time to time in various parts of the globe, just as those who live far from volcanoes and seacoasts, know that

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from time to time eruptions and earthquakes do occur. Free of proscription, well paid, accustomed to a well-rounded life, the popular classes in America are far more obedient and amenable than in Europe. They have been scarcely touched by the curious messianic illusion of a regenerating revolution that is penetrating deeper and deeper into the minds of European masses.

From these favorable conditions was produced American optimism. Simple and simplifying, it is a state of mind which sometimes irritates Europeans who know that all the branches of the human family did not receive from God six and a half million square miles of fabulously rich land to exploit. Nevertheless this optimism is, together with the abundance which nourished it, an element of social stabilization the importance of which cannot be exaggerated, and a most powerful antidote against the discordant

tendencies that are so active in every rich and cultivated civilization.

If the enormous wealth of the United States does not afford the comforts and amenities that the more modest wealth of Europe assured us twenty years ago, it does at least permit the whole country to lead an orderly and stable existence. The middle and cultivated classes have difficulty finding servants; they have to be contented, in the large cities, with living in boarding houses or small houses: they do not find it easy to bring up a family. But the general optimism, certain luxuries — such as trips to Europe — which they can allow themselves from time to time, and the justifiable hope of unforeseen but possible amelioration, helps them to bear these inconveniences and makes them tolerably satisfied with their lot. On the other hand, if the rapid enrichment of the United States has worked to the profit of the labor-

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ing classes rather than the middle classes, there is at least this advantage: prosperity assures tranquillity among the masses.

Life in Europe is harder. The large states occupy restricted territories, with resources that are limited in comparison to the population even when they are fairly large. The natural sources of wealth are not so generous, not so plentiful. The marvels of modern machinery, if they do exact an effort of equal intensity, give forth more modest results.

We are striving at the foot of a volcano that is always active, always menacing. We are not yet sure whether the World War, with its ten millions of corpses, was the epilogue or the prologue to a long period of wars. We do not yet know what principle of authority must be recognized, or must be obeyed. In many countries there are being set on foot experiments of various kinds which, if they are successful at all, will drag Europe

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back into an improved Middle Ages, with poison gas and nitroglycerin as improvements. Between monetary oscillations and fluctuations of diplomacy, our existence is a perpetual uncertainty.

In such conditions the universal greed for gain which is Americanizing Europe and transforming the greatest possible number of people into producers of wealth, may cause us to lose our former advantages without assuring us those which are enjoyed by Americans. Therein lies for Europe the great danger from world unification. The crisis of the middle class is proof of it. Americanization sacrifices them, more and more, to the popular classes. But their impoverishment is not confined to the loss of certain commodities which they possessed twenty years ago—such as the ability to find cheap servants—America shows us that the middle and intellectual classes can

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live and do their work without having many servants at their disposition. In European countries this impoverishment, aggravated by monetary crises and financial disorder, could easily destroy an organ essential to the social life. Where would state employees, for example, be on the day when the ruin of the middle classes was effected? In Europe such an occurrence would signify the total disorganization of the state. But the enrichment of the people which in Europe also, counterbalances to a certain degree the impoverishment of the middle class, does not seem to have a tranquilizing effect on the masses, as it does in America. Until the present time, the messianic faith in the efficacy of world revolution appears to gain strength proportionately as the masses contract the wants and vices of the bourgeoisie which they pretend to regenerate while encompassing its destruction.

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The Americanization of a country demands a politically sound order, a tranquil public spirit, a certain peace. Without these conditions, the struggle between continually changing interests becomes a cause of disorder that grows more and more serious. The Americanization of Europe can only be a useful phase of the unification of the world if Europe achieves a solid internal equilibrium and an international peace; it cannot go on indefinitely; it will have to stop at the point beyond which it will work to our destruction. Unification does not mean absorption. Europe cannot become a carbon copy of America, because certain elements of its former civilization are bound up with its very existence. The day that they are destroyed Europe, too, will cease to exist; and then it will not be dissolution, but annihilation in other parts of the globe.

CHAPTER NINE

Negations of World Unity

b) The Creator of Artificial Wants

U_P to the middle of the Nineteenth Century want was the terror of every nation and human existence could be defined as an incessant struggle against periodic famine which stalked through every country on earth, even the richest and most industrious. Transportation of unwieldy and heavy commodities being difficult and very expensive, each country had to live by its own harvests. It thus found itself at the mercy of every whim of nature.

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What a number of expedients were imagined in order to avoid the danger by creating an artificial abundance! The struggle for wheat is one of the secrets of forgotten history which we no longer understand. Fertile countries tried to keep their supply by preventing exportation; sterile or scantily populated countries to augment theirs, even by forcibly compelling whenever they could, fertile countries to give up their excess harvests. Fertile or not, each country sought to accumulate, in the good years, reserves for the bad.

In the most prosperous period of the Roman republic, the *frumentationes* — the provisionment of Rome and free distribution, or distribution at a special price, of wheat to the people — played a political rôle far more important than did the great questions of foreign policy to which the empire was committed. Christianity asks its followers to

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pray each day for bread: *Da nobis panem nostrum*, millions of human beings still repeat each morning.

There were, in the past, despotic governments which allowed their subjects none of the rights which an enlightened century declared inalienable, in theory at least. But neither in Babylon, nor Nineveh, nor Memphis, did a tyrant quarrel with the right of his subjects to eat bread, as much as they wanted provided they had money to pay for it.

Gradually, by a complex and uninterrupted effort of labor and reflection, a part of humanity was freed of this constant agony. Since the great Irish famine of 1846, Europe and America, with the exception of Russia, have had no reason to worry about their daily bread supply. Railroads have made possible the exploitation of continents and international commerce in cereals: Rus-

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sia, the United States, Canada, Argentina and Australia have become world granaries, always ready to fill up the deficient harvests of overpopulated nations in Western Europe. For the first time in history, a half century has passed in which private commerce has sufficed to regulate the distribution of wheat at least throughout the whole of Europe and America, so that everybody has been able to eat his fill. The age of great plenty has begun and the state has been relieved of one of the most difficult of its tasks.

What a triumph for man, for his intelligence, for his industry! The most precious achievement of the conquest of the earth and world unification, which was started by the great geographic exploration of the Fifteenth Century, this security of food supply has meant the disappearance in Europe of the terrible specter which hunger was in bygone

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days. But then suddenly an extraordinary thing occurred, a thing which no prophet could ever have predicted: the fear of want gradually replaced by fear of too great abundance, of overflowing granaries, of unmilked cows....

If a statesman of antiquity could be brought to life to-day, he would be amazed at many things. But the institution which he would find hardest to understand would perhaps be that of import taxes on foreign wheat which the most populous states of Europe have seen fit to establish in the past fifty years. To prevent or to make more difficult, the importation of wheat, that is to say to create artificially a kind of relative want—no notion could seem more outrageous to an age obsessed with a fear of famine and preoccupied by an effort to assure abundance, even by violent means. In those days it was exportation of cereals

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that was to be prevented, and not importation.

God finally heard the prayer which so many centuries addressed to Him with unwearied stubbornness: *Da nobis panem nostrum quotidianum*. Thanks to the conquest of the earth and unification of the world, this ardent vow of humanity was granted at last. Why should mankind persist in the destruction of its greatest achievements in one of its most precious benefactions?

What an upset of ideas, what a string of absurdities! Gradually having become engrossed by the idea, worried by the effect which importation of cereals might have on foreign exchange, governments which were the progeny of the French Revolution, unwittingly instigated a partial denial of the most inviolable right of the working man: the right to eat. For to limit, even by indirect means, the supply of bread which can

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be consumed in time of plenty, is partially to deny this right.

What we call by a rather barbaric word, "prohibition," that is, the power to forbid certain drinks or foods to men—was at one time the privilege of divinity. To keep the Jews from eating certain meats, or the Arabs from drinking spirituous liquor, a Moses or a Mahomet was necessary, a religious reformer speaking in the name of God. Modern states must have an almost superhuman conception of their power in order to be able to decree, using the public welfare as a pretext, "prohibition" of bread.

CHAPTER TEN

Delusions of World Unity

c) International Plutocracy

A GREAT deal has been said since the War about international plutocracy. The parties of the extreme right and extreme left unite in denouncing it as a secret and baneful power which is directing the world and sapping its strength. Mysteriously it would emerge out of the confusion of tongues, it would cross every frontier, impose itself on every clime: in brief, it was to be the evil genius of world unity.

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Yes, in every country — republic or monarchy, dictatorship or parliamentary régime, industrialists and bankers understand how to protect their interests, even when the latter are opposed to the public interest. The fact is indisputable; but is it an anomaly? Property owners, small and big business, the liberal professions, employees, farmers — are they not also capable of protecting their interests even to the detriment of public welfare? This universal opportunity to manage one's own affairs, which collective egoism sometimes abuses, is an advantage common to every system of government derived from the French Revolution: why must industrialists and bankers be excluded?

Public opinion in general, however, does not let this privilege, legitimate despite certain abuses, trouble it when it is engaged in denouncing the occult power of the plutocracy. It believes in an invisible influ-

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ence which throughout the world controls visible governments, which would be capable of creating or upsetting ministries, of imposing itself on parliaments, on cabinets, on the press, on public opinion. Does this mysterious and formidable potency actually exist? Or is it rather a product of the human imagination, unwearied creator of apparitions?

I have traveled a good deal: I have known politicians, bankers, industrialists and seen the machinery of government functioning in every clime; I have followed the development of a certain number of important political matters and I try to keep myself as well informed as I can on what is happening in the world. Is my poor perspicacity responsible? For I must confess that never have I been able to catch this mysterious force in action.

The socialists have been repeating for the

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past ten years that the World War was launched by plutocracy. Are they sure of it? It would suffice to have known, at least superficially, pre-War financial and industrial circles in order to learn if they were, even in Germany, pacifist. They wanted only an eternal crystallization of the *status quo*. If the fate of the war and peace had been, in 1914, in the hands of plutocracy, the world would have grown as old as Methusalah in peace and contentment. But plutocracy, passive and potent like so many other social groups, watched the development of events which it was going to exploit, without having either wanted them or foreseen them.

For this so-called international plutocracy to exercise an invisible hegemony over the world, it would first have to possess ideas, plans, political conceptions. A slight acquaintance with the business world of Europe and America is enough to prove the

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non-existence of these conceptions. When a business man plunges into politics he very often plunges in furiously, but the case is rare; generally speaking, industrialists and bankers interest themselves in politics only so much as their business demands and subordinate their opinions to certain interests, which are entirely legitimate. What business men want most of all from governments, is order; the simple and solid and concrete, and sometimes rather uncivilized, stability needed by industry and commerce; as to the means of obtaining it, which is the great problem for the politician, they are relatively indifferent. They have preferences, but rarely of such strength that they cannot sacrifice them to the necessity for living in harmony with those in command.

Almost invariably business men are careful, in their reasoning and action in regard to political matters, never to let their opin-

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ions embarrass them in their contacts with the ruling power in foreign countries. It is virtually a professional necessity since business is business under the Soviet régime just as it was under czarist absolutism, in democracy or dictatorship alike. This professional necessity, however, calls for an elasticity of opinion and a lukewarmness of passion which are admirably suited to the exploitation of divergent political situations but are ill adapted to create or to direct one alone.

Therein lies the reason why the political opinions of business men are so frequently a curious mixture of common sense and superficiality. At least it is the contradiction which has struck me the most. Rarely are business men the victims of factitious or illusory reasoning in the political ideology of the right and left parties; but with what bewildering ease do they simplify the most

complicated questions. Accustomed to manage men according to a mathematical rule consequent to economic interests, they imagine that affairs of state can be conducted by the same linear simplicity. Nothing is harder for them to understand than the complexity of the passions and interests with which the statesman is daily forced to wrestle. The stupidities which their partial knowledge of life and human nature leads them into, whenever they venture out of their proper sphere, are unbelievable.

Nor should the cosmopolitanism of plutocracy be exaggerated. In an age when trade between the most remote nations is multiplying, it is inevitable that the great European and American banks should be in continual contact with one another. But banks and business are far more international than are the bankers. In spite of the inextricable interrelation of business affairs,

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the bankers, British and French, American and German, remain in their respective countries keeping their own ideas and emotions and character just as do men of letters and landowners, men of the world and working men. The same contradiction whereby the world is being unified despite a multiplication of languages and an increasing independence of nations, great and small alike, can be found in finance. The multiplicity of the national spirit is a great obstacle to internationalization of business, however essential it may be. It has made international financial action far from certain, even if the financiers of the two worlds did have political schemes in their heads.

But we believe not only that the world is governed by money. We also attribute to it the prophetic faculty. Without realizing it we have made the Bourse into the Delphic oracle of the modern world. Is there dan-

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ger of war between two powers? We consult the quotation board. If the monetary standards of the country are weakening it is a sign that the chances of peace are lessening; if the monetary standard is strengthening, the chances are greater. Is a country troubled by an internal crisis? By its quotations, the Bourse will tell us if things are getting better or worse. The Bourse is well informed: the Bourse knows what simple mortals cannot know: the Bourse watches over the universe.

There is, in this belief, some truth and some imagination. To speculate is to be forewarned. A man who buys a stock because he expects to see it go up, as well as the man who sells it for the opposite reason, is making a forecast which implies a judgment on the political situation of the country to which the stock belongs. Bankers and dealers in foreign exchange who negotiate

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in the larger Bourses of Europe loans and public obligations of every country in the world are obliged to judge the political situation of widely differentiated nations.

The task, however, is a delicate one. It is not an easy matter even for political specialists to comprehend the situation of their country in its entirety. The difficulty increases when it is a question of foreign nations, even though they may be near at hand, easily accessible and belonging to an analogous civilization. How many Frenchmen have a true understanding of the situation in Germany, or vice-versa? The difficulty increases still more and becomes virtually insurmountable when it is a question of far distant countries, with different customs and history. How many Europeans can flatter themselves that they understand the political situation in Paraguay or Nicaragua?

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There are in Europe, however, certain financiers whose duty it is to have an idea even of the situation in Paraguay or Nicaragua. The unity of the world, realized in business far more than in ideas or customs, imposes this duty upon them. How do they manage to overcome the difficulty? They form their opinions by studying certain elemental facts — territorial extent, natural resources, population, confidence in certain men, certain institutions, certain political principles — and they weigh the situation after these facts. The latter are not illusory; they represent elements of order and prosperity; but they are simple, useful only in normal circumstances, and have no weight in estimating the unforeseen — wars, revolutions, slow wear and tear of governments. They are very useful as a means of weighing probabilities, but they can give no certainty as to the future.

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Before the War, I was shown one day in a great credit institution, the studies by which the financial capacity of the Russian Empire had been established. They were most ingenious and reassuring to the creditors of Russia: but they had been built up on the supposition that peace would continue. Their conclusions were of value *rebus sic stantibus*. No financier could read in advance, in the most minute statistics, the paradoxical catastrophe which lost the war for Russia, in the victorious coalition.

Useful advice for investing money with prudence can be sought of finance but not prophecies which shelter us from the tricks of fate. It is the public which is being deceived when it accepts foresight as prophecy.

Money has always been, in every epoch, a source of immense power; it has become still more of one since the triumph of big business. But the result has been to endow

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it, during the last century, with a magic potency which has never existed except in the popular imagination.

Up to 1914, Europe was governed by courts and bureaucracies. In certain countries like France and England and a few smaller ones, organized political parties also played a part. The power of the court and the bureaucracy was never, not even in Russia, complete or exclusive. Court and bureaucracy had to consider the more active social forces, their desires and interests: of industry, of commerce, of finance as well. But the governing power resided in the courts and state departments which alone made decisions in large political affairs. The influence of the plutocracy was great in financial and economic matters, but nowhere else.

The World War was not planned in the board rooms of banks but in the salons of

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certain courts and in the offices of certain military staffs. Subordinated to these powers, plutocracy had to submit to the War as well. But the War broke up the old European hierarchy. The monarchy fell in Russia, in Germany, in Austria, in Greece. Wherever it still exists, it has undergone the reaction to these catastrophes. The greatest governing force of Europe has disappeared or grown feeble, and left behind it only a void.

Gradually new forces which will replace the monarchy are becoming organized and acquiring consciousness of their rôle. But time is necessary. Europe to-day is much less governed than it was before 1914; guidance everywhere is uncertain; everywhere circumstance rather than volition is in control of things. The transition was inevitable. If, after having been ruled by kings and emperors Europe commences to rule herself, she seems to be almost afraid of it and

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conjures up fantastic forces to fill the void left by the dissolution of the monarchical system. Plutocracy is one of these imaginary forces, to which can conveniently be attributed all the evils of which the world complains, because it is intangible.

It is an imaginary force and it will remain so. As it will have no single master, the world will never be governed by a single force. Where the greatest religions have been defeated, money will never succeed. In certain general, common tendencies, the world is approaching unity but it demands all its autonomies and individualities whether they be local or national or continental. Bankers can transact business in every latitude, industrialists buy and sell in the four quarters of the globe; they cannot impose their wills on the spirit of the world, neither in its increasing multiplicity nor in its potential unity. Furthermore they have

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not the ambition; they are quite content to harvest the enormous profits which the internationalization of business assures them. Therein they show more common sense than the public which detests them for a tyranny of which they have never dreamed for the simple reason that they have neither the desire nor the ideas nor the means of using it.

The Danger of Crystallization

“OUGHT then the unity of the world, and the unity of Europe which is an integral part of the world, to be a living unity which does not exclude discord, struggle, war? If this is the case everything that tends to solidify the world or a part of the world ought to be combated: particularly the League of Nations, which aims at the solidification of Europe in its present form. Europe is a living entity and, for the very

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reason that it is a living entity, is tending towards unification."

This objection, in one form or another, often crops up in discussions about the Geneva institution. It is a special variant of the conflict between order and life which disturbs the modern spirit so profoundly, an order which tends always to solidify itself, life which rebels against all attempts at solidification. It was discussed in an indirect way but with much finesse by M. Jules Cambon in his admirable book "The Diplomat," which the former ambassador from France to Berlin published some time ago.

"Reflect a moment," writes M. Cambon, "on what would have occurred if the League of Nations had been in existence when M. de Cavour was reconstructing Italy. It is likely that the Kingdom of Naples, the Papal State, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany would

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have belonged to the League of Nations; their governments would have denounced at Geneva the aggression that threatened them. The League would have attempted to intervene. Would it have been successful in stopping Garibaldi and the Thousand in their march on Naples? The question is legitimate. Moreover, I have no doubt that in 1864 Denmark would have appealed to Geneva when the Germanic Confederation was seeking a quarrel. Whatever would have been the attitude of the League in either case, M. de Cavour and M. de Bismarck would have had to take it into consideration; unless it had been intimidated or divided, the League would not have confessed its impotence!"

A more pertinent illustration of the possibilities of the Geneva institution could not be selected, nor an instance of the limitations and dangers of maintaining the *status*

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quo. If events exist which can throw a strong light on the problem of the future they are those which occurred in Italy between 1859 and 1861. It is merely a question of putting them in their historical background, that is, in what might be termed the "crystallization" of Europe, effected by the Congress of Vienna and the Holy Alliance.

The dynasties which, having escaped from the deluge of the Revolution, set about the reorganization of Europe at Vienna in 1814-1815, tried to build the new order of things on a principle of law: dynastic legitimacy. The precaution was necessary since no state could exist by force alone; but was the principle selected strong enough to resist the revolutionary forces of the period? Dynastic legitimacy, which the royal families demanded at Vienna in 1815, signified in its strict sense the right to rule

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over territories which had belonged to them prior to the Revolution, no matter what was the original title to the possession: treaty, marriage, or inheritance. Thus conceived, it was a principle of law that was still in force at the time of the Vienna Congress, because a part of Europe recognized, in 1815, the right of certain royal families to govern.

But it was not, as a principle, universal in application. The Revolution and the Empire had resulted in the destruction of many ancient republics and ecclesiastic principalities, and the dispossession of many minor reigning families. Peoples who had lived under these régimes did not recognize the right of any of these royal families, survivors of the revolutionary deluge, to govern them. The territories of the Venetian Republic, those of the Republic of Genoa, the Rhineland were the most celebrated ex-

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amples of this kind. These territories proved the stumblingblock of the Vienna Congress and of the dynastic principle. What was to be done about them?

They were distributed among the surviving dynasties, surrounded by territories over which the rights of the legitimacy were incontestable. The dynastic right to these dubious boundaries was established by the Treaty of Vienna. Having thus settled as best they could the difficult problem of legality, the signatories of the Treaty of Vienna bound themselves mutually to respect each other's rights. In this sense it is quite correct to call the Holy Alliance a League of Nations of a monarchical character, in which each nation is identified with a sovereign family: a "league" or a "society" founded to guarantee the rights of all the members, independently of the strength of each.

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From 1815 to 1848, the league of dynasties compelled the stronger nations to respect the rights of the feeblest and solidified Europe within the mold of the 1815 treaties. The creation of the Kingdom of Belgium in 1830 was the only important change in the political fabric of Europe made during these thirty-three years; but the initiative for it was taken by a popular movement. The 1848 Revolution itself at first did not appear to weaken the league of dynasties nor to shatter the crystallization of Europe. One dynasty alone tried to profit by the upset in order to aggrandize itself at the expense of the 1815 treaties, and it was not one of the larger dynasties, which obligatory respect for the feeblest serve to restrain; it was one of the small dynasties, for which the Holy Alliance was only a guarantee. The contradiction is curious and inspires lengthy reflection. When Charles Albert de-

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clared war on the Austrian Empire in 1848, he unsheathed his sword against the whole "crystallizing" system of the Vienna Congress.

For the great dynasties fear of revolution was stronger than the desire to profit by it. Russia helped Austria to conquer Hungary; Austria as soon as it had conquered Piedmont, contented itself with the abdication of Charles-Albert; in Prussia Frederic William the Fourth fled in consternation from the imperial crown which the Parliament of Frankfort offered him.

The 1848 Revolution seemed abortive insofar as revolt against the 1815 treaties and the league of dynasties were concerned. In 1850, the solidification of Europe effected by the Vienna Congress appeared to have withstood the shock of a virtually continental revolution. But the vanquished of 1848 and 1849 had not disarmed, neither in

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Italy nor in Germany; and events were working for them from the moment that Napoleon's nephew seized possession of France. Being unable to sympathize with the 1815 treaties, the new ruler hastened to place France in a position antagonistic to the league of legitimate dynasties. Those who were to profit by it were not slow to appear.

Recently published documents have proved that Napoleon III and Cavour at one time considered the possibility of changing the whole structure of Europe by a war of annihilation on Austria. Cavour, who often let his imagination run away with him, actually dreamed of witnessing in 1859 the catastrophe of 1918; the end of the Austrian Empire. But if these somewhat lyric hopes were destined to be groundless, what a surprising dénouement was in preparation for 1859-1861. The world was going to see the

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crystallization of Europe, which had resisted an earthquake in 1848, be shattered by the lightest shock.

It is well known how the initial victory of the French and Piedmontese armies terrified the European powers. The ghost of widespread war emerged from its tomb; the Germanic world was agitated; Prussia mobilized; Napoleon III and Francis Joseph saw an abyss opening in Europe, and were appalled. Fear of general warfare made it easy for the two heads of empire to reach an accord. The King of Sardinia would receive Lombardy; as to the Italian question, it would be disposed of within the limits of the old dynastic league, by the vague scheme of an Italian confederation analogous to the Germanic confederation, of which the Austrian Empire would be a part. Cavour resigned in desperation.

But then the unification of Italy, which

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everybody, commencing with Cavour, had believed impossible unless the dynastic league was overthrown and Europe plunged into total confusion, which had been shelved by the 1815 treaties, came almost effortlessly to the fore. The restoration of the ancient Italian dynasties effected by the Vienna Congress had been only partially successful. In all the states of the peninsula, given back in 1815 to the old dynasties in a somewhat enlarged form, democratic ideas and national aspirations were prevalent, particularly after 1830, among the cultivated classes. If the mass of the people—workmen and peasants—remained faithful to the old régime, a portion of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, the most active energetic portion, had for twenty years been aspiring to profound changes. As long as the Austrian Empire was encamped in the valley of the Po and kept the small states of the peninsula

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subservient by force of arms, the opposition had to bide its time. But scarcely had France and Piedmont declared war on Austria than in certain states, and afterwards in others, after Solferino and the evacuation of Lombardy by Austria, the minorities rose against their almost defenseless governments. The Austrian army—tiny in comparison with those Europe has seen since 1870—had been after 1815, together with the Piedmontese army, the only serious military force within the peninsula.

The dispossessed or threatened dynasties then had recourse to the League of Nations of the period, that is, to the most powerful courts of Europe, in order to protect the rights of their legitimacy against the bold attacks of the revolution. When Cavour, recalled to power, entered central Italy in defiance of its rulers, all the plenipotentiaries

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accredited to the court of Turin were ordered by their governments to protest against the violation of privilege which the House of Savoy was committing against the feeblcr dynasties. What, however, was the use of these protests when events were moving with such precipitate force?

The 1859 campaign caused the order of things established in 1815 to disappear from Italy, by weakening the Austrian Empire, which had supported it. For its reëstablishment, force would have been necessary.... Alone or helped by other defenders of the dynastic principle Austria would have had to declare war again on Piedmont, invade central and southern Italy, replace by force the dynasties deposed by the Revolution, and recommence on a much larger scale the war which Austria and France had just stopped so precipitantly, for fear of further complications. Was it possible to contem-

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plate such an adventure? But if war could not be recommenced, it remained only to let the country get out the best it could from the mess into which it had been plunged by the war of 1859, the armistice of Villafranca, the sloppy peace of Zurich, and by uprisings of the people.

Thus it was that the league of dynasties suddenly found itself powerless to protect the rights of the legitimacy. To the Prussian minister, come to protest against the annexation of central Italy, Cavour responded: "Some day you will thank us for having shown you the way." The solidification of the Holy Alliance was shattered for good and all.

One day the surprise might easily be repeated under another form.

The League of Nations is not as new a thing as its name would indicate. After every great war European states have felt

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for three centuries that a certain stability was needed to support the principles underlying the peace. After the Thirty Years' War it was the juridical system which, under the name of public right, assured a certain stability in peace and war up to the French Revolution. After the wars of the Empire, from 1815 to 1914, the pact between the great dynasties which was unbroken until 1848, then partial, but still capable, after the war of 1870, of maintaining peace for forty-four years. To-day it is the League of Nations, that is to say, the combined mass of rules and principles which it elaborates and imposes on each of the member states with the support of public opinion and interests which favor peace.

The latest attempt will be neither more nor less vital than its predecessors. The League of Nations will impose itself on every state and render the greatest service

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as long as Europe has need of peace and reason to shun a general conflagration. It is not yet, however, an institution destined to assure the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth or peace and good-will among nations. Like the Holy Alliance, it can grow feeble and exhausted should the danger of general war lessen, and should localized war again become at once essential and possible for the settlement of otherwise insoluble questions.

The events of 1859-1860 show us how the laws of human existence may become paramount to a diplomatic crystallization. Why was the Holy Alliance, which was instituted to maintain *in æternum* the 1815 treaties, compelled in 1860 despite its enormous power to recognize the *faits accomplis*? Because the latter represented a solution of the Italian problem which had been achieved without disturbing too pro-

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foundly the equilibrium of Europe, whereas a terrific conflagration would have had to be started to prevent this solution, or to find another. This topsy-turvy state of affairs was the unforeseen result of a half-century of history; as soon as Europe recognized it as such, the powers of the Holy Alliance became reconciled, understanding that an integral application of their principles would have set far greater evils in motion than did their partial violation.

The same thing would occur if one day the League of Nations wished to prevent Europe from evolving into forms towards which it was pushed by a profound or vital necessity. An institution such as that at Geneva can act only as long as a stable order, a unity solidified between certain groups of powers, is plausible and necessary at one and the same time. This is why it

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will probably have for several generations a brilliant rôle to play in Europe.

In Europe, in this over-populated continent which is habitable only by virtue of a narrow economic and intellectual collaboration, between nations long periods of peace and the crystallizations which make them possible are almost a biological necessity. I am not sure that the same thing can be said, to-day, of Asia. A section of Asia is in a state of ferment which seems to make any systematic stability impossible within the near future. It is evident, for example, that the yellow chaos is entirely outside the scope of action of the League of Nations.

In America, an institution like the League seems less essential than in Europe, if not altogether superfluous. The states are so large, they still have so few interrelations, they are so ill armed that dangers of war are few, and probabilities negligible. Wars which

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might break out would be localized by geographic necessity. Certain American states are more or less exposed to the danger of convulsions such as those which have been agitating Mexico for the past fifteen years, but the League of Nations is as incompetent to deal with this type of warfare as it is in Asia.

Europe to-day recalls the period when the Holy Alliance, despite the heavy opposition which it encountered everywhere, was successful in prescribing peace because Europe needed and wanted it. Like the Holy Alliance, the League of Nations will be successful regardless of hidden or overt opposition, every time that it has to deal with European problems, provided that it acts with courage and foresight. It would seem, on the contrary, to have little to do in America, unless unforeseen events arise to upset even in the New World the equilibrium of forces. And

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it will be unable to act either frequently or successfully in Asia where revolutionary ferment seems to make stabilization impossible.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Nation and Civilization

“**M**USSULMAN against Christian, Oriental against Anglo-Saxon, democracy against dictatorship, free thought against dogma, socialism and communism against capitalism, these are conflicts which exceed rivalries between nations and empires and aggravate them. Within the boundaries of each state, aristocracy and bourgeoisie, united for defense, now quarrel over the choice of civilization. Inversely, men of identical re-

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ligion or identical ideals massacre one another in the name of their country. It is the great drama of our century, the immense risk of the future. The twin concepts of nation and civilization have become disunited. The task ahead of young Europeans is to reunite them."

Every attentive reader has been or will be struck by the gemlike conciseness of this passage in a book which one of the ablest historians and journalists of our time, M. Lucien Romier, has written, under the title *Nation et Civilization*. It gives, in several lines, the essence of this little book, at once enlightening and profound; and it poses under its more general and vital form the question of world unity and the arguments in its disfavor. Evidently the conquest of the earth, its unification by railroad and telegraph systems, by Americanization and representative institutions, would be of small

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importance if the world, thus unified, is to be torn in shreds by a death struggle between these two paramount ideas.

If a civilization is a more or less harmonious and balanced synthesis of moral principles, scientific knowledge, social institutions, practical activities and aesthetic creations, what M. Romier describes as the concept of civilization has never been richer or more striking than it has been in Europe for an entire century. Scientific knowledge has, during this century, increased enormously along with all forms of practical activity: industry and commerce, agriculture, sports and inventions. No century has painted, sculptured, instructed, composed, written as largely as this indefatigable and universal century. If the quality of its work has sometimes suffered by reason of the abundance of its effort, the Nineteenth Century can boast of an originality and an

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audacity in every sphere of art unknown to preceding epochs. A still greater wonder is that the Nineteenth Century has been, in spite of its lack of religious enthusiasm, the great humanitarian century, the most Christian of all centuries. No other has so humanized political institutions, laws, the family, educational methods, manners, justice, philanthropy; all relations between human beings. No century has been as successful in assuring to a part of humanity more order and more liberty.

“Christian idealism, armed by the Greek spirit and leaning on the Roman order, has effected the glory of Europe,” writes M. Romier.

Is then, a civilization of this kind, cultivated, humanitarian, wealthy, active, in danger of coming into mortal conflict with nationalism, or rather with the political organization which universally has, or is

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about to have, the national concept for basis? Evidently, when M. Romier denounces this danger, he is thinking of the World War. Before 1914 no one was afraid that the invaluable treasures of our civilization might some day be threatened with total destruction. Suddenly we saw the Christian spirit of the most humane age fall impotently back before the atrocities of the most murderous war in history; the wisdom of four generations, which had made of thrift and industry two civic virtues, powerless to stop the most terrific waste of capital the world has ever seen; the juridical sentiment of the one civilization which had dwelt successfully under the dual emblem of stability and freedom, powerless to compel respect for the most elementary rules of war; its love of art powerless to prevent an appalling destruction of masterpieces; its science powerless to break through the hatred of frontiers.

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Daily we were forced to realize that, despite our culture, our humanitarianism, our liberal institutions and the perfection of our laws, the State, as representative of national interests, could place itself over everything: morality, science, law, wisdom, common sense. From this point of view our civilization must confess itself inferior to others poorer and more ignorant and barbaric. Before the French Revolution, not even the most despotic states could aspire to such supreme authority, surrounded as they were by other powers: for example by the Church, guardian of a moral law which public conscience regarded, in Catholic countries, as superior to any human authority. How distant that time seems! In 1918 I had occasion to come into contact in Rome with certain influential personalities of the Vatican; nowhere else did I find such a keen awareness of the terrible material and moral

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consequences which might be brought about by a war of unlimited extent and duration and method such as the one which was then staining Europe and Asia with blood. But this awareness was paralyzed by a feeling, no less keen, that it was impossible to do anything to stop it. If even the Church felt itself powerless, what other institution or social group could have intervened? Every active force in European civilization was, during these terrible years, the docile slave of the State: newspapers, public opinion, banking circles, industry, science, education, religion.

This wholesale seizure of the most precious possessions of a secular civilization by the State terrifies us. We would like to be sure that it was an exception and would not occur again. But how can we be guaranteed against the danger?

M. Romier is quite right to say that it

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would be absurd to look to the State for guarantee. The state, in its relations with other peoples, is the very soul of national egotism and statesmen could not, without betraying their trust, rid themselves of this egotism. "Spokesmen of the state are going to protect," he writes, "in international conferences, national tendencies or interests that first of all were enrolled under the banner of particularism. That banner cannot be furled by statesmen. States will indeed be able to record the progress of European solidarity, but they will not know the way to promote it."

There is need, therefore, of a strong combination of independent moral forces to keep modern states from sacrificing the invaluable treasures of our civilization on the altar of increasingly savage wars. What combination? M. Romier envisages a spiritual authority, analogous in a certain degree to

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that of the Church during the Middle Ages but under a different form: "a European aristocracy of faith and ideals"; an aristocracy of "science and art" which would safeguard the conscience of all that, in European civilization, is essential and vital and superior to national egos, national necessities: all that should be forever preserved.

"It is the select few who create a prestige of the intelligence. It is from their collaboration with the universities and academies, from the interpenetration of schools of thought and influences, as well as by the reformation of taste among the aristocracy and bourgeoisie that a great European century will be born."

Such is the agreeable project of a "European *élite*" conceived by M. Romier. I believe that Renan had a similar but more vague idea, like a splendid dream. Is the World War going to be the means of trans-

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forming a dream into reality? If the outcome is to entrust the moral unity of the world to this superaristocracy of the intelligence then the sacrifices it demanded were not too great. Let us work therefore for the creation of this *élite*, but without hiding from ourselves the manifold difficulties of the task.

The chief one consists of what might be called the "bureaucratization of culture." In France the inconveniences of the project are not understood as well as they should be, because France is the one country in Europe in which there still exists a certain number of cultural centers independent of the State and able to oppose it. France is the exception. In the rest of Europe natural as well as political and moral sciences—law history, philosophy, political economy—draw their sustenance directly or indirectly from the state. Literature and art are freer; but if they

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are no longer directly under governmental control, they cannot defy or disturb it with impunity. Even to-day, artists and men of letters live more agreeably and work more profitably if they have succeeded in winning the approval of authority.

No longer does there exist anywhere in Europe a writer or philosopher or jurist or historian or physician or chemist in a situation like that in which in Catholic countries prior to the French Revolution the theologian found himself—able to speak in the name of an authority regarded by everybody as superior to the State. Doctrines are so elastic that it is difficult for an honest patriot, even if he is not animated by hope of personal advantage, to keep them always in harmony with the interests of the state. During the years which preceded 1914 professors of international law frequently were called upon to give their opinions of the in-

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cidents and differences which were occurring regularly among the great powers. I do not recall a single case in which one of these jurists decided his country to be in the wrong. Invariably they found arguments to prove that the law was on the side of their government. Why? They were not judges who were deciding points of law, but lawyers pleading their cause.

Intellectuals in every country are in a somewhat similar situation to-day. It does not seem to me that they will be able to change very easily. And as long as this situation lasts, enlistment of the new aristocracy is not going to be either very easy or very abundant.

Must one conclude that the conflict between the concept of the nation and the concept of civilization is going to lead Europe into a new barbarism? It would have to be admitted first that the state of affairs

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brought about by the World War is destined to be permanent.

While the War lasted, peoples submitted to the hard law of necessity. Each belligerent thought only of escaping from the struggle as well off as possible. But the exasperation of the national ego brought about by the War was always regarded as transitory, or even as a means of guaranteeing for the future the benefits which the War apparently destroyed or compromised: peace and law and justice and material prosperity. If what M. Romier calls the national concept grew exceptionally strong in the Nineteenth Century, the concept of civilization is in nowise weaker. Despite the ruination caused by the War and the moral disorder which it left everywhere, we still belong to the ablest, the richest, the most humanitarian age in history.

For the moment the sentiments which

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gave worth to this superiority have been paralyzed; they are not dead. It is necessary only to let them assert themselves freely in order to have them recapture their strength. I believe I was one of those who had the least illusions as to the difficulties which the victors were going to meet, regardless of their victory, but never did I believe that Europe would renounce the noblest part of its old civilization to commit suicide in an interminable war of national vanities.

Facts are commencing to prove that this cautious optimism was not unjustified. Once the first fury of the war spent itself, national egotism weakened; little by little every people is showing a diminishing reluctance to make the sacrifices necessary to assure a stable European order: this "crystallization" of peace which, without being immortal, is the first condition if Europe is to be restored to its one-time splendor.

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If what M. Romier calls the concept of civilization could be encouraged, if its defense could be entrusted to a group of powerful and influential men of intelligence, there would be nothing to do but render thanks. Sentiments of justice and right, of solidarity and liberty and humanity are sufficiently strong, however, even without this *élite* to prevent a return to barbarism, provided they can assert themselves as in pre-War days.

This is the reason why, while waiting for the European *élite*, it appears particularly necessary and urgent, if European civilization is to be saved, to safeguard liberty. The marvelous synthesis made by Europe between the Greek spirit, the Roman spirit, and the Christian spirit, can encounter serious dangers only if in the more powerful and civilized states of Europe the power falls into the hands of armed minorities

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which, in the name of a narrow and fanatical nationalism, or of a new notion of universal goodness, will curb the noblest and profoundest aspirations of the modern soul. Then a mortal struggle between the concepts of nation and civilization would indeed commence, because they would no longer balance one another as they have always done in Europe, with the exception of a few passing crises.

The lightness with which, in every country immediately after the War, a section of the wealthy and cultured classes toyed with the doctrines of depotism seems to me far more dangerous for civilization than the excesses of national pride. Political and intellectual liberty is to-day the vital problem of European civilization. The former will be saved despite the violent upheaval of the War if the majority of European states are successful in allowing the moral forces of our

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time the opportunity to assert themselves freely. These forces are manifold and vigorous and profound, and they contain in themselves the guarantee of all the equilibrating force necessary for the Europe of to-morrow to be worthy of the Europe of yesterday, even to the force necessary to maintain a balance between the concepts of nation and civilization. National egos under all their forms — from xenophobia to imperialism — will find their leash in these salutary forces. If the synthesis of Greek and Roman Christian spirit brought about the grandeur of Europe, to safeguard this grandeur the spirit of each must be allowed to develop and to collaborate and to struggle in freedom, under equal conditions without state intervention aimed at the suppression of any one of the three.

Thus the problem seems to be much simplified. The supreme safeguard of a civiliza-

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tion as complex as ours is liberty; and consequently the element which in free countries has become the great preservative force now that the great preservative forces of the past — monarchy and Church, tradition and family — have either vanished or grown feeble — but already I have spoken of universal suffrage....

“What a paradox. Universal suffrage a preservative force—a safeguard of civilization!” many readers will cry. Yes, it is a paradox and, according to ideas current in certain circles, an enormous paradox. Since 1848 the advent of universal suffrage has been regarded by the conservative classes and a part of the intelligentsia as a new invasion of the barbarians, which would destroy civilization a second time. But this enormous paradox is not the restless spirit of the curious philosophy which brought it into being; rather is it the stupendous, almost

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incredible, events of the past few years. It is like the corner stone of the new order of things which men must create; so long as they do not understand this, they will have no idea what they are striving for.

Yes, universal suffrage is to-day not merely the safeguard of civilization; it is even the rampart of God. Are you aware of the fact that at a certain moment in the conflict between Church and State in Mexico, the Mexican bishops proposed that the government, which refused, submit all questions of controversy to a popular referendum? The Church which for so many years regarded universal suffrage as a thing inspired by the Devil, was ready, one year ago, to entrust to it, in Mexico, the cause of God. . . . Is the Church, too, suffering from the democratic delirium? Is the Church learning from Rousseau? No, but it has understood the

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enormous paradox which events have brought about.

Cast an eye over Europe; and compare the nations which are ruled by universal suffrage — France, England, Germany, Belgium — with the countries where universal suffrage has been chained up by an armed minority — Russia, Italy. What do you see? The former are governed by a policy of intermediates, that is to say, by compromises between ideas and parties, conciliation between conflicting interests. In the latter the dominant minorities employ extreme methods.

The contrast is not hard to explain. The enormous masses of men — and in many countries women too — which compose the electoral body of great modern states are heterogeneous. All classes and trades, all professions and interests, all degrees of culture are intermingled. Rich and poor, work-

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men and peasants, literate and illiterate, bourgeois and aristocrat, shopkeeper and savant, believer and atheist, industrialist and property owner, unite to form the enormous mass of the sovereign people.

This mass can commit every mistake, possess every conceivable fault. But it has one quality: it is impossible that so heavy and heterogeneous a mass would let itself be convinced or carried away in its entirety by an extreme idea. Its volition will always break it up into a great number of different currents, represented by more or less far-sighted parties which will eventually reach a mutual understanding through a spirit of conciliation. There will be also in the mass extremist currents but as they will always be numerous and opposed to one another, none will be able to dominate by itself. Those which do not care to be condemned to futile protest will be obliged to ally with

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other parties, conservative or extreme. A radical idea is never acceptable to any but a homogeneous minority; before it can dominate the state, the homogeneous minority must seize control unaided. Universal suffrage makes this impossible.

No, never would universal suffrage have consented to the reëstablishment in Italy of the absolutism of a hundred years ago. Never in Russia, if the Constituent Assembly had not been dispersed by the fist of Lenin, would universal suffrage have permitted the enormous and radical destruction which swept over all of Russia. Extreme minorities in Europe could effect a definite rupture between the concept of civilization and the concept of nation, by sacrificing one to the other; universal suffrage would never do it. Peace, legality, security, humanitarianism, justice, patriotism, beauty, culture, the reign of reason, gentleness of manners — these are

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the aspirations of every people in Europe or America and belong with what I have called the "profound and permanent desires" of the masses. Peoples may be deceived as to the way of attaining these benefits or delude themselves as to the sacrifices necessary to their acquisition; but they are ardent in their desire for them, and never will they consent to their destruction.

The more heterogeneous and free to organize and assert itself in accordance with its manifold tendencies that universal suffrage becomes, the less will it have to fear from conflicts between its "profound and permanent will" and its "transitory and capricious will." A caprice, among groups as among individuals, is always something extravagant, violent, extreme; the more resistance the heterogeneous masses of modern groups offer to extreme ideas, the more stubbornly will they refuse to be swept away by

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transitory passions. Liberty will be everywhere the surest collaborator with the *élite* which should always watch over the sovereign will of the people to see that it asserts itself under its "profound and permanent" form.

Liberty is not as dead as the revolutionary parties, hostile to universal suffrage, pretend because it bars them the road to control. But its rôle changes with the times, and with its rôle, its theory also should change. Liberty was invoked, more than a century ago, to release the latent energies of Europe and America, which the old autocratic and patrician civilizations had imprisoned; and to achieve the conquest and unification of the earth, commenced four centuries ago. It is necessary to-day to adjust and balance these energies in an order wherein the divine rights of the many will be the supreme safeguard of the most precious treasures of

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civilization. Such is the new duty of a world which is being unified by no single plan imposed upon it by a single force from outside; but gradually rather, in an interrupted flux of decomposition and recomposition, in an incessant oscillation of stress and strain which breaks up old solidarities, and of new solidarities which restrain the unifying stress and strain the moment it approaches the danger point.

T H E E N D





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